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ABSTRACT

These four papers look at some conditions and circumstances surrounding the literacy education movement and at education's response to a new set of cultural requirements for effective living. They provide ideas for administrators of private and public adult education programs, business and industry executives, and all concerned with adult literacy. In "Modern Adult Basic Education: An Overview" by Curtis Ulmer the state of the art is reviewed. Following a survey of the history of United States literacy, the characteristics, attitudes, and needs of the illiterate are discussed, literacy is defined, literacy legislation and training are outlined, and effective programs are described. The paper concludes with implications for the 1980s. "Critical Issues in Adult Literacy" by Oliver Patterson and Louis L. Pulling covers recruiting and retaining illiterate adults, goals of literacy programs, identifying target populations, minimizing failure, and mobilizing community resources. Adult education strategies are surveyed in "Adult Basic Education Instructional Strategies: Their Design and Improvement" by K. Owen McCullough. The paper describes roles and clientele characteristics, expounds adaptation of various learning theories to adult basic education, cites instructional techniques and materials, and predicts changes in adult education. "The Care and Feeding of Instructors of Adult Literacy and Basic Education" by Waynne B. James considers the need for quality instructors, instructor role, instructor competencies, instructor selection, and instructor training/preparation. (YLB)

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OUTLOOK FOR THE 80's:

ADULT LITERACY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Basic Skills
Improvement Program

Edited by

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Program Specialist

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FOREWORD

The present era is one in which tremendous forces of change are at work in our society. The promises and the pitfalls which accompany these changes are often discussed and debated, as are the practical implications these changes may have on education's methodology, management, and perhaps its very mission in future decades.

The purpose of this particular project was to provide a vehicle for the exchange of such views between the Department of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Program staff and representatives of some organizations interested in adult literacy.

An Adult Editorial Committee was established, consisting of representatives from the Adult Basic Education Commission, the Adult Education Association, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the American Association of Public and Continuing Education, the American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations and representatives from community-based programs. Working with the U.S. Department of Education Basic Skills Improvement Program, the Committee discussed issues, prioritized, and developed detailed descriptions of topics, which resulted in the commissioning of four concept papers.

One paper reviews the state of the art since 1960. Another paper deals with critical issues in adult literacy and community-based organizations. A third addresses what constitutes a successful adult program, while a fourth paper is concerned with the role selection and preparation of instructors.

The document is not meant to be prescriptive, however, this concerted effort provides important ideas for administrators of private and public adult education programs, business and industry executives, and all concerned with adult literacy.

Gerald W. Elbers
Deputy Director
Basic Skills Improvement Program

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PREFACE

The unity of knowledge, the nature of ideas, and the very notions of society and culture have changed to such an extent that society today, in a sense, is virtually a new world.

One thing that is new is the prevalence of newness--the changing scale and scope of change itself--so that the world alters continually. What is new is that in one generation, knowledge of the natural world engulfs, upsets, and complements all knowledge of the natural world before. We need to recognize the change and learn what resources are available. (Oppenheimer, Perspectives U.S.A. II).

This new-world reality, so eloquently described by Oppenheimer, created a new society where the unskilled and undereducated citizen became disadvantaged in terms of coping in society. As the nature of employment, man's relation to institutions, and his relations to others changed, so did his educational needs. No longer was the classic definition of education--the adaption of man to a static culture--sufficient for a lifetime of change. The definition of education slowly, but with certainty, changed to the concept of education that enables individuals to become all that they are capable of becoming. This concept, in turn, has changed the nature of education to a concept of lifelong learning. Since change appears to be the only constant in society, the "full cup" concept of childhood education is not valid in this generation. Instead, the purpose of childhood education is moving toward acquiring a basic education that will allow individuals to train and retrain and continue to learn throughout life.

Illiteracy, then, is a social, economic, cultural, and educational phenomenon that defies conventional wisdom regarding definition or remediation. It touches totally the lives of those who are afflicted by it, and, to some degree, it affects every citizen. For most of those who do not possess a basic education--and therefore are functionally illiterate--illiteracy is a modern curse that effectively bars them from participating fully as workers, citizens, or parents. Education for illiterates must be a combination of social and occupational learning, as well as learning communication and computation skills. Today's literate citizen must learn to cope with the complexities of a technical society while learning to read, write, and compute.

The four papers included in this volume on adult literacy will attempt to look briefly at some of the conditions and circumstances surrounding the literacy education movement, and to look at education's response to a new set of cultural requirements for effective living. Obviously, the challenge is greater than space permits, but, hopefully, a brief coverage of the major trends in basic education will foster more understanding of the problem. Education was the spark which set off the technological explosion that created the new illiterates; and education is the only means by which the dilemma can be solved. The catch 22 is that education for the illiterate must be as effective--but different--as education for the modern scientist. It will require a proportionate share of our educational resources.

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MODERN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Drs. Curtis Ulmer and James Dorland, in an overview paper, survey the history of U.S. literacy education. They describe adult evening classes during colonial times, so-called Moonlight Schools started after World War I, military training programs during World War II, television education programs during the 1950's, and Federal training programs during the 1960's and 1970's. They enumerate the critical literacy education trends of the 1980's, touching on dramatic curriculum changes and the social and political awareness that will form a major part of these trends.

I. INTRODUCTION

To a large extent, any overview of a subject as complex as adult basic education will be subject to a variety of interpretations. Even the very term "adult basic education" has only been generally accepted and widely used in recent years. Such terms as "literacy training," "literacy education," "fundamental education," "basic skills training," "elementary education for adults," "pre-high school education," and others have been used to describe what is being referred to in this paper as adult basic education.

The lack of agreement over terminology is not surprising since various terms are used to refer to educating (or is it training?) adults, such as:

- adult education
- continuing education
- recurrent education
- lifelong learning

There is no clear consensus on these terms. However, there is agreement on the concept that education is a process which can continue throughout life and that there need be no age barriers to this process. How each country and each society educates its adults differ. This paper is an overview of modern adult basic education in the United States merely as the authors see it.

Populations served

Estimates vary depending on the source of data and definition of illiteracy, but there are between 50 million and 65 million adults in the United States who lack the educational skills required to fully participate as workers and citizens. Those who possess marginal skills find it increasingly difficult to cope with society's complexities; others who lack minimum skills generally have depended on society almost completely for food, clothing, and shelter. The social and economic costs of illiteracy are staggering--in terms of the gross national product and the frustrations to individuals unable to cope with the ordinary demands of modern living.

In a large sense, illiterates comprise an invisible minority, hidden by standard dress that masks illiteracy from others. Thus, the population is identified mainly through census reports, unemployment figures, school enrollment data, and welfare rolls. How did modern illiteracy occur and what changes must occur to alleviate it? Perhaps a brief review of the problem and educational responses will help in understanding the complexities of the problem in the 1980's.

Literacy education reviewed

In the United States, education has always been valued as a personal objective and goal. Schools tended to follow the various migrations as the Founding Fathers moved from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast over several generations. Furthermore, literacy has been pegged traditionally at

specific educational grade levels, such as the fourth grade, the eighth grade, and finally, the 12th grade. Only in recent years has the concept of literacy been extended to include coping skills as well as grade levels.

Literacy education in the United States is practically as old as the public school movement. Adult evening classes were fairly common in the colonial era, although the first significant literacy movement occurred as the result of successive waves of immigrants and the "Americanization" classes for teaching language and the skills required for naturalization. The recent influx of Indochinese, Cubans, and Spanish-speaking people from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, and elsewhere has created a new interest in English-as-a-Second-Language, although there is considerable difference between the needs of these students and native illiterates.

Moonlight Schools. The next wave of literacy training began in and spread across the southeast after World War I. So-called Moonlight Schools involved large numbers of persons who were taught by volunteers and public school teachers. This movement introduced the first adult-centered materials as "primers" developed around adult themes principally related to religion, home and family life, and the virtues of honesty and integrity. Cora Wilson Stewart was the movement's spiritual head and wrote a number of "primers" and a popular book entitled Moonlight Schools. During the Great Depression, a number of Federal programs devoted to literacy education--including W.P.A. and C.C.C. efforts--emerged, although the government gave work to unemployed teachers as a part of these programs.

Military training. The military in World War II routed illiterate recruits through training battalions for basic reading and computation skills prior to assignment to duty stations. In addition to emphasizing communication and computation skills, the military stressed social skills for military life and personal hygiene, perhaps a forerunner of modern coping skills. The military also introduced a new concept in developing materials by using cartoons and comic books to create in a lighthearted vein an interest in reading. The cartoons and comic books always taught some principle of safety, military discipline, or group living requirement. The military's interest in literacy education has continued through the years, contributing much to current knowledge of methods and materials in teaching illiterate adults.

Television and church. The next wave of literacy education began in the 1950's and centered around three societal forces: the new technology of television, the beginnings of the technologically unemployed, and the church. A national television program, Operation Alphabet, was shown in a number of States. The viewer could get a book, generally free, and follow the program at home. Other television programs involved group viewing in a home or public facility; the programs would be followed by an instruction period led by a volunteer who may have had some previous experience or inservice training in literacy teaching.

By the early 1950's, about 15 States had designated a person in the State Department of Education who had responsibility for adult education. Most classes were sponsored through public schools and generally focused on high

school diploma or high school equivalency programs rather than the lower grades. Emphasis was on high school completion for vocational training, licensure for a trade, or for college admission.

The third force of the 1950's sprang from an international program founded by a missionary, Frank Laubach, who stressed a simplified teaching and learning concept based on a simplified alphabet. It was hoped that each person who was taught by the "Laubach Method" would assume a moral obligation to teach another person to read. The movement quickly spread to the Third World, and millions of persons learned to read the basic materials provided by the Laubach Foundation. Laubach's materials used pictures that framed letters of the alphabet to trigger interest and memory. The Laubach movement created tremendous interest worldwide, resulting in the development of a literacy center in Syracuse. The center became a leader in producing materials for literacy students and research designed to make literacy teaching more effective.

Literacy as a national concern. The literacy movement appears to fall into two relatively distinct periods--prior to 1964 and after 1964. While teaching methods and materials have tended to be cumulative, and much valuable experience was gained prior to 1964, it appears that program purposes changed dramatically after that year. The earlier literacy training goals tended to focus on enabling an individual to gain communication and computation skills to achieve personal and occupational goals. Literacy program providers often acted for humanitarian and religious reasons. The curriculum tended to stress teaching, reading and writing, and English to recent immigrants, while the programs stressed diploma and equivalency programs for advanced adult students.

Passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 signaled a change of purpose for literacy training. For the first time in the country's history, illiteracy became a national concern. The welfare of society is tied inextricably to the significant illiterate minority. To paraphrase a civil rights statement of the 1960's, one might say that as long as a significant minority remains in a ditch, the majority must remain there with them. Passage of the act with its Title II B provisions for Adult Basic Education and the subsequent passage of the Adult Education Act of 1966 signified the beginning of a new profession. Instead of sporadic waves of literacy training programs staffed by volunteers, the adult basic education profession now includes thousands of full-time and part-time professional teachers, curriculum specialists, teacher trainers, and material specialists. Publishers have discovered a lucrative market and vie to produce the finest teaching materials. The new interest has extended to labor, business and industry, and Federal and State agencies. The military has increased its efforts and routinely trains thousands each year in literacy programs.

II. CHARACTERISTICS, ATTITUDES, AND NEEDS OF THE ILLITERATE

The invisible poor

The adult illiterate is categorized often as the invisible poor because, although they abound in numbers, they are not identifiable until they apply for jobs or attempt to use a public agency service. It is estimated that as many as one in five U.S. citizens falls into this category. Groups of ethnic minorities, inner-city residents, recent immigrants, farm and migrant workers, and rural poor tend to include numerous illiterates. The following social and personal traits--which must be considered and dealt with before an instruction program is effective--characterize the illiterate adult.

The illiterate adult:

- has a devastated concept of his or her own self-worth;
- does not necessarily have the same values as the middle-class citizen;
- has not seen the "American Dream" realized in his or her life or in the lives of family and friends;
- is usually the last to be hired and the first to be fired;
- is a target for replacement by automation;
- has difficulty complying with society's regulations;
- is likely to be on welfare;
- leads a survival-based life--"live-for-today" syndrome;
- generally does not see value in returning to school--which was a bad experience for the few years he or she attended;
- tends to perpetuate illiteracy through example and attitude to his or her children;
- has innate potential for anger and resentment;
- is fearful of new experiences;
- is unaware of the changing environment because his or her own world seems unchanged;
- is an inefficient consumer; and
- is likely to have health problems.

Obviously, no single set of characteristics adequately describes such a large and varied population. However, illiterates tend to live in restricted areas, and effective adult basic education program specialists can quickly identify unique local characteristics. While the characteristics listed here are by no means complete, they give some idea of the problems faced by local programs. One well-established principle of teaching functional illiterates is: They will not become effective learners until their pressing fears and anxieties surrounding their new venture are met. Added to personal fears is their marginal status as wage-earners and what is often the unsatisfactory nature of their personal lives.

These conditions must be dealt with by the adult basic education program, regardless of the agency offering the instruction. It has been estimated that on a national level, only 2 percent of illiterates attend classes. Unfortunately, most do not see literacy classes as a viable opportunity to lead better lives. Perhaps more correctly, the low self-esteem and their lack of information combine to prevent illiterates from seeing literacy classes as a means of improving their circumstances. Another possibility is that illiterate adults perceive literacy education instruction programs in many geographic locations to be of no benefit--or that the education process is too long to be of immediate assistance.

Employment and the illiterate

The nature of work has changed dramatically in the last generation. Automation, space technology, atomic energy, and other technological breakthroughs have created new demands for workers, but, at the same time, have abolished jobs traditionally held by illiterate or semiskilled workers. Future employees must have a basic education that will allow them to be trained and retrained several times during a career. The changing nature of work, as well as other social forces, have altered the nature of education from a static, youth-oriented institution to an institution in which students are often adult, often parttime, and in which the emphasis is on individual student goals rather than on group goals.

The dilemma facing our national, political, and social structure is very real and can be summarized, although simplistically, in the following question: Should the nation place its priorities on a welfare system for the illiterate adult or should it place priority on a program of education for the poor and illiterate adult? While the question cannot be answered simply, it appears that the nation cannot adequately support a growing population of nonproducers.

The obligation of education appears to be in restructuring public educational programs to allow adults to enroll at various times for either short- or long-range educational goals. Two educational institutions, vocational-technical schools and community colleges, have moved increasingly in this direction over the past decade; but the program is often limited, lacking effective, parallel academic instruction at the vocational-technical level.

The conservative political shift of the 1980's may indicate growing support for public literacy programs and a corresponding cut in welfare-type programs at the Federal level. A personal goal of many individuals enrolled in literacy programs has been to gain employment that would allow them to move off welfare. Funding literacy programs provides an attractive legislative alternative to funding welfare programs.

Target population.

The June 28, 1979, Federal Register targets seven special populations for emphasis for programs serving adults under the Adult Education Act of 1966. The groups tend to include those with the highest rate of illiteracy, but also includes some hard-to-reach populations and others that have been historically neglected. They are:

- Adults with limited English
- Institutionalized adults
- Adult immigrants
- The elderly (age 55-65)
- The handicapped
- Women
- Minority groups

The Register also states that emphasis should be given to adults living in rural and urban areas with high rates of unemployment. Each targeted group requires, to some degree, a specialized program relative to educational and social objectives. For example, adults with limited English and adult immigrants must first learn to speak English before they can learn to read and write it.

Literacy training is often part of an inmate rehabilitation program at State and Federal prisons. A trend has developed in State prisons whereby prisons are considered a separate school district, and extensive programs of education are developed. In other systems, the local school district or volunteers offer literacy classes in State and local prisons.

Older-age groups are increasingly enrolling in literacy programs. They often return to school to work toward a new part-time occupation or for personal goals.

Illiterate groups contain more handicapped individuals--those with specific learning and social disabilities and physical handicaps--than the general population. In many instances, the handicap is the reason the person failed to learn to read or write during childhood. Others are handicapped because of inadequate diagnosis and treatment of visual or hearing problems that could be corrected with treatment. Programs for the handicapped require

the services of specialized personnel to diagnose medical and personal problems. The remaining groups for special attention--women, minorities, and rural and urban residents in areas with high rates of unemployment--have generally been the focus of recruiting and training in literacy programs.

Participation by illiterates

Each illiterate adult tends to be socially isolated, ill-prepared for work, subject to family and personal problems, and requires an educational program tailored to his or her needs to maximize the chances for success. To this extent, almost all illiterates are similar. However, those with additional burdens of a physical handicap, institutionalization, or the lack of ability to speak English have even more difficulty fitting into a program.

As mentioned, many illiterate adults do not wish to participate in education programs sponsord by Federal, State, or local government agencies. Some feel that additional skills in reading, writing, and computation would not improve their economic circumstances, while others think that the process takes too long. Others believe that they are simply incapable of learning; still others do not participate because they feel hostility towards the U.S. Government.

However, many undereducated adults may not have the information required to make good decisions. For this reason, it appears that effective orientation programs should be developed through informal institutions frequented by illiterate adults. This orientation could be to publicize literacy programs, and could include some program innovation in which instruction for short-range goals could be conducted in 1- or 2-week institutes.

III. THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

There is no single accepted definition of literacy because the term encompasses culture, time, place, and national economy, as well as educational level. For example, in some countries persons are considered literate if they can sign their name, while in a highly technical nation, a high school graduate may be considered illiterate. Within the past two generations in the United States, literacy has been set at three levels: fourth grade, eighth grade, and at high school completion.

The concept of functional literacy has been accepted generally by educational practitioners the past few years. Briefly stated, functional literacy is the ability of a person to function adequately in his or her culture as an effective worker, citizen, parent, and consumer. It implies that literate persons possess the basic educational skills that allow them to train and retrain for employment or for personal goals. Functional literacy is a philosophical as well as an educational concept. It is tied closely to various curricula offered in places such as public schools, military services, business and industry, and labor unions where the intent is to provide the basic skills needed to cope in a specific area, such as the military, or in everyday life. The concept is one that allows persons to learn specific, useful information while learning to read, write, and compute. The concept is associated with the adult learning principle that states that adults will learn those things that are immediately applicable to their lives. Adult educators recognize the importance of the "developmental task theory," as well as the value of the "teachable moment," when learning takes place readily.

Confusion exists over the term functional literacy for several reasons. In one area, a functional literacy program may be concerned with teaching adults the language and computational skills required to mix farm herbicides, while, in another area, the group may be learning the language and geometry required to navigate a ship. What is essential is that growth in communication and computation parallel growth in a specific skill.

It is predicted that by the year 2,000, 80 percent of homes in the United States will have a computer. Practically the entire population is functionally illiterate in using home computers, which will involve programming, automatic accounting, and many other functions. Millions will require computer training. However, there will be one important distinction between training for its use and the training that an illiterate receives: Most persons who receive training in computer use already possess adequate verbal skills, but the illiterate adult must learn verbal and computation skills, in addition to modern technology skills.

IV. LITERACY LEGISLATION AND TRAINING

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 provided the first Federal funds for literacy training. The funds were allocated by the Office of Economic Opportunity to the U.S. Office of Education late in fiscal year 1965, so that little was done by the various States until after June 30, 1965, the end of that first fiscal year. The following year, the literacy program (called Adult Basic Education) was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and formally titled the Adult Education Act of 1966. The program at the Federal level is administered by the Division of Adult Education Programs in the Department of Education. Federal funding for the Adult Education Act increased from an initial $5 million a year to $100 million a year for the State grant program in 1980.

The responsibility for allocating funds and administering the program rests with the States--specifically the State departments of education. The State's fundamental role is that of providing leadership and assistance in developing local programs. It also has certain regulatory functions regarding the use of funds, requirements for teachers, outreach, and other aspects of the program.

To receive Federal funds for literacy programs, each State must submit a comprehensive plan according to Federal guidelines required by the Department of Education. States are required to provide matching funds equal to at least 10 percent of the Federal grant. However, most States exceed this amount, and several States provide more revenue for literacy education than they receive in Federal funding each year.

The historical significance of Federal adult education legislation appears to be that illiteracy is a pressing national concern, since a highly technical, industrial society cannot function effectively when large numbers of its citizens are illiterate and incapable of participating.

Adult education providers

Sources that provide adult education services are more likely to be informal rather than a school or formal class organization. The illiterate learns to survive in many ways, through knowledge gained from the street, the police and courts, television, on the job, as well as in the home and community. The research of Allan Tough, in Adult Learning Projects, indicates that adults generally turn to sources other than schools when they need to learn. This is particularly true relative to specific training in business and industry, the military, and other agencies where the training function is provided by the employer. However, in the past, it was generally assumed that the person being trained should possess basic reading, writing, and computation skills, and the training would be work specific.

During the 1960's, many service providers discovered that they could no longer depend on attracting workers with sufficient communication and computation skills, and many included basic educational skills in their training programs; the demands of high technology required workers with better basic educational skills.

The following agencies have adult education as one of their major interests, and most of them provide literacy education through formal and informal programs. For example, major newspapers will often include supplements with articles written on two-graded levels that are available for purchase by literacy programs.

- Educational institutions

  Public schools
  Colleges and universities
  Cooperative Extension Service
  Business, technical, and special-interest schools
  Private correspondence schools
  Private adult schools
  Libraries
  Museums

- Government agencies and departments

  U.S. Department of Agriculture
  U.S. Department of State
  U.S. Department of Educatic
  Miscellaneous Federal agencies that inform the public on specific fields
  State departments of education
  Health departments and institutions
  Armed forces programs
  Prison education
  Inservice training of government employees

- Private health, welfare, and recreation agencies

  Health education agencies
  Family counseling and guidance agencies
  Community welfare organizations
  Recreation and youth (Y's, settlement houses, etc.)
  Civic improvement groups
  Adult education councils and associations

- Business and industry

  Trade associations and business organizations
  Inservice training of employed
  Labor unions
  Professional organizations
  Farm groups

- Miscellaneous organizations

  Women's groups
  Service clubs
  Fraternal organizations
  Parent-teacher associations
  Alumni groups
  Veterans and patriotic organizations
  Political associations
  Churches and religious groups

- Mass media

  Newspapers and magazines
  Radio and television
  Motion pictures and theater

Social legislation

The era of the middle 1960's was truly the "Time of Camelot" for literacy education. Much Federal manpower was allocated to literacy education, and social legislation contained provisions for it. And, with the exception of literacy programs in the public schools, many offered family support or jobs for participants. Training programs flourished. Most programs were adequate; however, literacy components often had more enthusiasm than trained teachers, adult-centered materials, and a well-coordinated study program. Many programs ran for 3 years: adequate to generous funding the first year, maintenance funding the second, and phaseout the third.

The nation's enthusiasm and generous funding for eradicating illiteracy seemed to be unlimited, providing illiteracy could be abolished in a 3-to-5 year period. As the realization grew that abolishing illiteracy was a major social and economic problem that would take one or more generations to solve, the programs tended to revert to the public schools, military, business and industry, and those agencies whose traditional function was to implement adult education.

The professionalism movement

Following the exuberance of the 1960's, a long term trend toward the professionalization of literacy education began. The trend developed more or less evenly across several broad areas that included: curriculum development; teacher training, and, in some cases, certification; materials development; and organizational stability. The move toward professionalization was improved substantially by a parallel trend of utilizing full-time adult teachers instead of traditional part-time day teachers.

The professionalism movement tended to be coordinated by a network of State and national professional organizations that provided a forum for sharing new program advances among various agencies, organizations, and businesses involved in literacy education.

The public schools, State departments of education, and universities joined forces to develop a unified concept of instruction through curriculum development, materials, and teacher training. Nationally, it may be said, with notable exceptions, that the programs were staffed with part-time day teachers who used the same teaching materials and methods used in their elementary or secondary classes.

The pressing need to provide teachers with a new orientation about characteristics of illiterate adults emerged. A second priority was to instruct teachers in the methodology of adult education, with an emphasis on the differences in teaching children and adults. Many literacy teachers had little, if any, experience in teaching reading; and consequently, teaching reading to adults was, and continues to be, a focus in teacher training for adult literacy teachers.

Development of teaching materials

Materials for teaching illiterate adults were practically nonexistent in the early 1960's. Those that did exist were primarily workbooks that were quite similar in format and purpose to those used in day programs for elementary children. Teachers often resorted to preparing their own materials to make instruction relevant to the needs and interests of the illiterate adult; but this was costly in time and effort. Two examples of effective materials developed in the late 1960's were learning kits prepared by Edwin Smith at Florida State University's reading clinic and materials in the Reader's Digest Adult Reading Series.

In 1969, the major publishers met with leaders in the adult literacy field at Cherry Hill, N.J., to determine the needs of this growing field; and a dialogue was established that extends to date. Since that time, many major publishers have added a series of adult literacy materials, and several new publishers entered the field to deal almost exclusively in the field of adult education. Programmed instruction materials, basal reader series on several grade levels, learning center software, and general occupational and consumer-related materials abound. In addition to the proliferation of books and software, an assortment of hardware has been developed in the last 10 years. Included are language masters, video cassette programs, and many other audiovisual materials for use in the classroom and learning centers.

Since the late 1960's, the situation has reversed itself to the degree that teachers now need assistance in evaluating materials for use in specific locations and for specific audiences.

Development of literacy curriculum

The emergence of storefront learning centers and institution-based learning laboratories that in some cases operated from 12 to 24 hours a day, spurred the development of two trends: using full-time professional adult education teachers and implementing a more efficient curriculum that addressed specific needs of the illiterate adult. Both trends brought together in a cooperative relationship the staffs of State departments of education, local adult education administrators, and college and university adult educators.

In briefly reviewing the development of literacy curriculum, one may say that it quickly grew toward the concept of individualized instruction based on the life needs of each student. This concept passed through several stages and tended to culminate with the concept of teaching life-coping skills with the necessary reading, writing, and computation skills. The University of Texas conducted a study in the early 1970's and developed a series of skills and tests to measure the need for instruction, as well as an instructional model. A number of States adopted Competency Based Adult Education (CBAE) as their preferred curriculum for literacy instruction. The curriculum, materials, and teaching philosophy are based on concepts that recognize the importance of individualized instruction and the generally accepted emphasis on behaviors in learning that concentrate on the purpose and outcome of education in terms of the learner.

Under the provision of the Adult Education Act, considerable funds were set aside for research and development and for teacher training. These funds have paid dividends in terms of research in literacy, materials development, and curriculum study. A second and significant result has been the development of new graduate study programs in adult education across the country in which teachers and administrators working in the field of literacy can pursue graduate degrees in adult education.

Military training programs. Military adult literacy training has become increasingly important in this technological era. In years past, the functionally illiterate or marginally literate soldier could be screened into the infantry or some other area where his limited knowledge would not endanger others. Modern weapons systems, machinery, and communications require higher levels of education at the same time that the "all-volunteer services" are attracting less educationally qualified persons. The ability of the armed forces to react to a national emergency is qualified in part by the ability of individuals to read, write, and compute. As an example of the scope of the illiteracy problem in the army, a contract for more than $20 million was awarded to Temple University in 1980 to conduct classes in basic and occupational education in Europe for soldiers who needed remedial skills. When the requirements for service personnel in the United States and other parts of the world are considered, the annual cost for remedial education is a significant portion of the defense budget. Military literacy training is occupationally related, although basic skills in communication and computation must be taught. Military educators have developed sophisticated instruction programs and have generously shared experiences and programs with civilian counterparts.

Industry education programs. Business and industry traditionally have supported adult education through training programs for employees, tuition payment plans, and staff development offices. Some businesses customarily give full- or part-released time for employees to participate in literacy classes and other educational activities. As a matter of self-interest and public service, a business or industry will provide classroom space and instructors in its plant for convenience of employees and the community.

Federal programs. Federal programs stemming from such legislation as the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) and the Comprehensive Education Training Act (CETA) have been implemented through contracts with private companies since the 1960's to provide literacy education along with skill training. Generally, these programs were developed to provide jobs and literacy training to persons who were not employable because they lacked minimum literacy skills. Job Corps and Teacher Corps had similar purposes during the 1960's and 1970's, although the training programs differed.

It is too early to gauge the success of these Federal programs, but the principle and value of training is well established in business and industry.

Literacy training has been a part of U.S. history and culture since the colonial period. Periods of national emergencies, such as wars and depressions, created a need for training for immigrants and workers who were displaced by assembly lines and increased technology. Training generally was conducted by volunteers and part-time workers and had little, if any, coordination between agencies. Public education agencies provided some training as a adjunct to their primary function of teaching children and youth.

Passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1965 began a new era in literacy training, which became a matter of national purpose in which focus and funds for the movement became institutionalized. Concern for teaching, research, materials, and curriculum development moved into State departments of education and colleges and universities; and major responsibility for programs shifted to public schools, military services, business and industry, and other agency bases. From 1964 to date, a new profession has been developing. While the programs are by no means fully developed, there has been a logical, coordinated, and rational growth in literacy teaching. The trend toward full-time teachers, day programs, and relevant instruction continues, hopefully at an accelerated pace.

V. EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

It is dangerous to label adult basic education programs, and it would be foolhardy to designate any as the "best." Doubtless, there have been many effective programs which have operated throughout the country. In recent years, the federally supported Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) validated three adult education projects. Briefly described, they are:

- The Adult Performance Level (APL) Project in Austin, Tex. In 1971, the U.S. Office of Education funded the APL Project at the University of Texas to conduct a research study with two specific objectives: 1) to define adult literacy in terms of actual competency to perform everyday life skills; and 2) to assess those competencies for the adult population of the United States. Based on the APL survey, 19.1 percent of the U.S. population was estimated to be functionally incompetent, 33.9 percent was functioning with marginal success, and 46.3 percent was performing at a high level of competency. The APL project developed a competency-based curriculum which has been widely adopted, adapted, and used throughout the nation.

- New York State External High School Diploma Program. This is an alternative high school credentialing program for adults who have acquired skills through life experience and can demonstrate these skills in applied performance tests. Its objective is to provide adults with an assessment and credentialing process that is an alternative to traditional diploma programs such as the GED (General Education Development).

- Project CLASS (Competency-Based Life-Ability Skills), Clovis, Calif. This project utilized a series of 60 modules to teach survival skills to a broad range of adults with low-level reading abilities.

Although these three JDRP-validated projects were experimental in design, the mass of adult basic education programs are not so research-based. Many adult educators pointed with pride to the fact that ABE programs take place under the aegis of a wide range of providers and with a variety of approaches.

Many approaches have been used. For example, an emerging delivery system using indigenous paraprofessional aides in home instruction was demonstrated by the Appalachian Adult Education Center in Morehead, Ky., in providing instruction to isolated, educationally deficient adults unable or unwilling to participate in formal programs. Other states--including Vermont, Kentucky, and Ohio--have developed similar programs.

In Philadelphia, the Opportunities Industrialization Center experimented successfully with Operation Armchair, a program in which tutors taught adult students on a one-to-one basis in their homes. The Los Angeles Unified School District developed an adult basic education program which became one of the most comprehensive in the nation, as did the Dade County school system in Miami, Fla. The Lundberg School in Piney Point, Md., developed a heralded adult education program for seafaring people. Learning laboratories, store-

front centers, and a variety of full-time adult centers have sprung up across the country. The 1978 amendments to the Adult Education Act for the first time included funds for community-based organizations, thus stimulating the entry of even more providers.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of any adult basic education program must be measured by the impact that it has on the life of the program's students. An Economic Impact Survey conducted by the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education in May 1981 showed over one-half billion dollars in savings from adults who were removed from public assistance rolls, became employed, received job promotions, or received drivers licenses for the first time as a result of their participation in adult basic education classes. Obviously, these results show that many of the programs have been effective.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 1980'S

In a December 11, 1980, U.S. News and World Report article, Alvin Toffler warns that "under conditions of high-speed change, a democracy without the ability to anticipate condemns itself to death."

Literacy is a cultural concept, and woven into the heart of the concept are factors of work, technology, attitudes, and, above all, concern for the future. To discuss literacy for the 1980's, one should look at long term societal trends that are related directly to literacy training. The following trends were extracted from a larger group of trends appearing in the September - October 1976 issue of Public Administration Review by Joseph F. Coates:

- Economic prosperity, affluence, and inflation
- Expanding education throughout society
- International affairs and national security as a major societal force
- Centrality and increasing dominance of technology in the economy and society
- High technological turnover rate
- Specialization (in work)
- Expansion of credentialism
- Women, blacks, and other minority groups entering into the labor force
- Growth of consumerism
- The institutionalization of problems (This is the tendency to spawn new institutions and new institutionalism mechanisms for dealing with what were personal, private, or nongovernmental responsibilities.)
- Growth of demands for social responsibility

Critical trends

Oppenheimer warns that society has changed more in one generation than in all the generations before, and that the world changes continually. World futurists see change accelerating in the 1980's, predicting that this period will be a critical one that will severely test institutions regarding their ability to adapt to change. For example, when society needs a basic service that is not being provided, it often invents or creates an institution to

provide that service. The expectation is that public education, business and industry, and government agencies will change fast enough to provide adequate literacy programs; but in the event they do not, the service will be provided--simply because literacy will be a requirement for effective living.

Three trends will shape the programming of literacy education in the 1980's: competency-based individualized instruction programs; technological advances in educational media and hardware; and parallel advances in programs in public education, military, business and industry, and other agencies which will tend to benefit each other's programs. These trends will be accelerated by the movement toward professionalization of literacy education in which full-time professionals, utilizing adequate materials and media, will continue to make literacy programs more attractive and beneficial to the various target audiences.

The 1980's and beyond will likely see a return of the concept of financial support for adult literacy students. It will be a matter of public interest to support a person for a few years rather than for a lifetime on the Federal or State dole. The past failure of these programs can be corrected in part by more understanding by planners concerning the social, educational, and personal aspects of literacy planning. As society moves to increase citizen self-sufficiency, there is a strong likelihood that requirements for literacy training will be attached to welfare payments and other forms of government subsidy.

The armed forces will institutionalize functional literacy training through training programs until an individual reaches a satisfactory performance on a prescribed reading and mathematics level. These levels will vary according to assignment, and training will be vocationally centered around training manuals and individual assignments. The military mainly will rely on advanced technology for individual instruction and will make a number of improvements in curriculum development. The return of a national draft could delay this movement for a few years, but, in any event, it should be in place within 10 to 20 years.

Labor unions involved deeply in adult education activities over the past 20 years will become involved heavily in literacy education (including consumer, occupational, and citizenship education), as they recognize the significant economical and political impact of illiterates. Union activity will tend to move away from the present single-trade approach to a more socially active role in the urban and inner-city areas.

Dramatic curriculum changes

As teachers become full-time professionals, the curriculum of literacy education will become increasingly sophisticated. Terms such as competency-based education and coping skills will become obsolete, since it will be assumed that every person has a basic right to an instruction program based on the individual's needs. The instructional mode will change dramatically and will be based on the individual learner's aptitude, abilities, and needs. Some persons will work outside of class using programmed instruction and

packaged instruction programs; they will come to the learning center for assessment, assignments, and teacher assistance. Others will work in a group setting with frequent teacher assurance and support.

The most dramatic curriculum changes will occur for adult students who are nonreaders or who read below the third-grade level. Initial instruction for these individuals will be conducted on a one-to-one basis by paraprofessionals or volunteer teachers, supervised by a professional teacher. Students will continue to be tutored until they can read at a third-grade level or higher, at which time they will transfer to a learning center or group instruction program.

Social and political awareness

Literacy education in the 1980's will become more political and social. Minority groups, immigrants, and inner-city residents will increasingly demand programs designed around social and political, as well as, educational objectives. These programs will tend to resemble the "socialization" concepts advocated by Paulo Freire. Neighborhood literacy programs will grow, and consequently, there will likely develop a strong peer pressure for participation. In these areas, the curriculum thrust will be toward more political and social goals, and individuals enrolled will focus on participation in group activities. As labor unions and community groups become involved, the literacy movement will embrace "blue-collar" activities and move away from the more traditional middle-class activities.

As formal childhood education changes, so will the structure of adult education. The trend whereby adults increasingly return to college will shift to secondary and elementary schools. However, the age groups will likely be separated under administrative structures that recognize the centrality of adult education in the total educational process. New administrative and financial structures will provide education at any level according to adult needs and interest. This concept is already in place and operating in the nation's community colleges and is fast becoming a fact in colleges and universities.

The question for the 1980's and beyond is whether this will occur within the presently established public education programs or whether a new educational institution will be established. The answer will depend largely on the flexibility and responsiveness of elementary and secondary education programs. The key element in this breakthrough is the increasing social and political awareness of the more than 60 million people whose educational skills are below acceptable standards for survival. The news media keep these persons informed on world and national affairs better today than college graduates were informed a few generations ago.

That illiteracy lowers the quality of life for all is a social fact. During the 1980's, this fact will become a major consideration of society--and society must decide how to deal with it.

CRITICAL ISSUES IN ADULT LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Oliver Patterson and Lewis C. Pulling deal with the problem of recruiting and retaining illiterates in an adult literacy program, raise critical issues regarding the goals of such programs, and describe strategies for mobilizing community resources to support them. The authors tackle the problem of defining literacy and determining the most effective teaching approaches for use in programs. Descriptions of illiterates' attitudes, perceived motives, and fears are included.

I. INTRODUCTION

During the past 20 years, a purported objective of American society has been to eradicate adult illiteracy. The Federal Government, in fact, recognized illiteracy as a nationwide problem in passing the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. For the first time, Federal money was allocated directly for adult literacy education. Evidence of the magnitude of the support is furnished by Bina and Dowling (1976), who reported that from 1966 to 1976 national expenditures for adult basic education programs increased from $32.5 million per year to $67.5 million per year.

Although progress has been made in reducing illiteracy (Fry, 1979), it is generally agreed that much still remains to be accomplished. In fact, it has been estimated that if the ability to read and comprehend the daily newspaper is used as the criterion of functional literacy, there may be as many as 40 million functionally illiterate adults in the United States.

The results of Corder's analysis (1971) of census data clearly reveals that illiteracy is disproportionately distributed in our society:

- Illiteracy was much more pervasive among African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans (i.e., American Indians), and Puerto Ricans.
- Illiteracy was found to be acute for those over 25 years old in the South and in metropolitan areas.
- The rate of illiteracy for black men was found to be twice the rate of illiteracy for black women. Only among blacks was there a significant literacy difference between the sexes.
- Of the total number of illiterates, more than 77 percent were found to be over 45 years old.

It is clear that illiteracy is much more pervasive among those groups that have been traditionally powerless in this country. Although one might wish to believe that the social distribution of literacy is an accident of history, it is obvious that it is not. For example, it was against the law to teach blacks to read prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. Moreover, publicly supported education was unavailable to teach blacks even in the most rudimentary form in many areas of the country prior to the 1930's.

The important psychological point, affecting both the literate and the illiterate, is that for most of U.S. history, society has made the issue of illiteracy invisible, and in doing so, has persuaded the illiterates--in schools and factories, cities and towns--to become invisible. (This paper will deal with the problems of recruitment and retention of illiterate

students in a subsequent section.) It is essential to understand that as society attempts on the one hand to call these people forward, it continues on the other, to send a message to them to remain invisible.

Definition of literacy

Webster - literate: Instructed in letter

illiterate: Ignorant of letter; synonym: ignorant

ignorant: Destitute of knowledge

There are important implications in the terms used to describe this phenomenon, i.e., reading, literate, and illiterate. Reading is a relatively simple skill. Literate implies the ability to read, and illiterate should describe the absence of a specific skill; and it does mean that, but regrettably it means a great deal more.

Illiterate means bad, and every illiterate in America knows that; most literates do not. Illiteracy is the kind of bad that touches every aspect of one's life. It is a condition that affects not only one's ability to read--it effects one's ability to be. A literacy program has to be a program that deals with a person's ability to be. It should involve the whole community.

When historians analyze the situation, perhaps they will find that the greatest illiteracy lies in the illiteracy of the literate about our illiteracy. There is still time to prove the historians wrong, and that is what this report is all about. The critical issues are:

- Goals of community-based organizations
- Recruitment and retention of students
- Instructional objectives and evaluation
- Identifying populations to be served
- Minimizing failure
- Mobilizing community resources

Although there is almost universal agreement on the fact that the United States has a literacy problem, there is no agreement on a definition of literacy. Gray defined a person as functionally literate:

> when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group (Gray, 1956, p. 24).

If we accept Gray's definition, the logical question is: What is the minimal level of reading and writing ability needed to function effectively in American society?

Some adult literacy specialists maintain that ability to read and understand newspapers should be the minimal level of functional literacy, for newspapers are the primary reading diet of Americans. Smith (1970) reasoned that since newspapers have a seventh-grade readability level, a seventh-grade reading achievement level should be the minimal standard.

A second approach advocated by researchers is to examine the minimal literacy skills needed to profit from vocational training. Sticht, et. al. (1972) sought to determine functional literacy levels needed for four selected military jobs (i.e., cooks, vehicle repairmen, supply clerks, and armor crewmen). It was concluded that an eighth-grade level was a reasonable "general purpose" target for functional adult basic education. Interestingly, the Adult Basic Education Act of 1968 recommended achievement of the eighth-grade level as the target of the Adult Basic Education Program.

It does appear that a literacy-knowledge level that corresponds roughly to junior high school achievement is needed to function effectively in American society, if by functioning one solely means ability to: (1) read and understand newspapers and (2) profit from vocational education.

A danger inherent in accepting such a prescribed level of literacy is that while it may answer the economic system's work needs, it may neither answer the needs of individuals nor of their cultural community. Many individuals who have worked long in adult literacy programs firmly believe that Gray's broad definition of total functional literacy, which stresses human as well as work needs, is preferable to the very narrow definitions currently employed.

II. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

As the introduction pointed out, the "deficits" of the illiterate are considerably more extensive than just "reading skills," and it is worthwhile to examine these deficits in more detail.

In the goal-setting process for the literacy program, the ability to comprehend written information is the bottom line. Since instruction in the reading process is given, the question remains—What other issues need to be addressed? If one begins with the students, when they first become involved with the project, one can attempt to analyze those factors in their lives that will impair literacy development.

From this list, some difficult choices must be made, for any literacy program cannot--and should not--be all things to everyone. The program, therefore, should identify those agendas which it will address--those that it will encourage the student to address and those which will be avoided.

Literacy programs must never undertake intervention beyond the program's professional capability. Here are some examples for purposes of illustration:

- Appropriate intervention: developing the student's positive self-image about his or her ability to learn.
- Appropriate areas of support: encouraging students to organize their time to minimize scheduling conflicts that reduce class participation.
- Inappropriate areas of intervention: psychological, financial, and social crisis in the student's life.

It boils down to this: The program will not work unless it recognizes and makes adjustments for the fact that the illiterate lives under enormous pressure, with often limited life-coping skills.

The program will not work if it tries to intervene in areas in which it cannot effect a positive result. Regrettably, there are not, and probably never will be, a universal list of "do's and don't's." The project will have to address and resolve the issues on an individual program basis, but here are some ideas.

What is the student's self-concept?

What aspects of the student's self-concept bear on his or her ability to become literate? And which of those aspects should the project address formally and which ones should be addressed informally?

What is the student's self-concept in relation to others?

The same questions apply as in the previous paragraphs, except that problems in this area will more likely bear on issues of recruitment, participation in scheduled activities--particularly classroom activities--and fear of discovery. These issues are absolutely critical to the project's successful implementation.

How does the student relate to the physical world?

Issues of money, transportation, shelter, clothing, recreation, as well as specific knowledge relating to the physical world, can critically impair participation. These agendas most likely will lie outside the scope of direct intervention but must be acknowledged as everyday realities affecting the project.

Gaining an understanding of the student is the essence of the program design, intervention strategy, recruitment, and community support efforts. This understanding is also the foundation of the goal-setting process and the evaluation strategy. Unfortunately, there are few models available in public education, since most existing education programs consider curriculum the given and students the variable. Quite the reverse must be true in basic adult literacy.

Characteristics of the illiterate student

We shall examine some general characteristics of an illiterate student in the hope that these characteristics may be helpful in identifying and understanding pupil population in a wide range of project situations.

Poor versus nonpoor. By and large, illiterates are raised poor and remain poor. Poverty affects the language base, scope of personal experience, self-concept, and logistical factors influencing the students' consistent participation. Many students, however, are economically successful. Individual entrepreneurship, job seniority, and personal thrift are factors that can lead to economic security even though the individual is illiterate. Obviously, the economically successful individual will have fewer deficits and more strengths. These factors must be built into the program's concept.

Cultural majority versus cultural minority. Perhaps the most profound deficits are those that exist between majority and minority persons. While in the broadest sense poor and female are minority, the cultural, ethnic minority classifications are considered here.

In this melting-pot nation, people fail to understand each other and their differences. The traditional majority, i.e., white middle class, is as impaired (when it comes to understanding the illiterate) as any group. There are great pressures imposed on minorities, e.g., Native Americans, Hispanic, and black, that must be acknowledged if the literacy program is to succeed. It is particularly important to understand and remember that the literacy being discussed is presumed to be the literacy of the majority culture.

"Noneducated" versus "education failure." Many Americans, particularly older ones, simply dropped out of school early. They contrast with people who attended through their 16th year. School failures have negative attitudes about organized education and their ability to function in such a setting. That self-concept may be an absolute impediment to participation unless it is dealt with and overcome.

A sensitivity to the stimulus that evokes negative feelings toward resources must be maintained. Forms to fill out, rows of classroom furniture, blackboards, bells, teacherish-looking people--all have an impact on the beginning "education-failure" student much more than the "noneducated" student.

Male versus female. There is a difference. It varies with age, ethnic background, and Region. The difference also varies with the ratio of program participants. It is difficult to make many valid generalities except to say that the gender issue can be an absolute impediment and must be analyzed according to conditions in each community.

Young versus old. Age certainly is a factor in the rate of learning; older students tend to be more persistent but progress slower. Adolescents and children may threaten a young adult. These concerns are greater for the beginning student, but are always present.

"Given up" versus "yet to succeed." It is probably true that most beginning students see themselves as either having tried to learn to read and failed, or they have yet to complete their "trying" process. Obviously, the "tried and given up" have a serious impairment. Unless the impairment is recognized and addressed, there will be a high dropout rate, resulting in a large part from the self-fulfilling prophecy. Many of the same characteristics are seen in the "noneducated" versus "education failure" analysis. In this category, students have an extensive exposure to formal education but see themselves in a wide spectrum of personal commitment to mastery of the reading process.

"Learn to read" versus "get it together." Many students, particularly those over 30, have developed a stable life style--stable residence, income, and a relatively unstressful daily routine. For this student, reading may be a clearly defined agenda. While the student may not have a realistic concept of what literacy really is, at least the student has a clear focus on one aspect of life.

By contrast, there is the student who perceives his or her life as being disorderly. Income, housing, and daily routine may experience wide variation. Literacy may be perceived as the answer to the dilemma. If the student is to be effectively retained, he or she must find a way to sort out the various life problems and to see literacy as a related but separate agenda. Otherwise, the student may experience a failure in expectations or a lack of concentration and commitment to literacy.

"Ego secure" versus "insecure." With rare exception, the illiterate adult will have a seriously damaged ego. Any effective literacy program must be able to deal with this reality. Ego strengths will almost universally improve with instructional progress, but the ego issue will account for a large part of the dropout rate. Some entering students, however, will have positive and balanced self-concepts and, therefore, will exhibit greater ego strengths. The point is that ego deficit is directly proportional to rate of gain in literacy. Individual students must be assessed, and self-confidence must become a specific program agenda.

"Marginally committed" versus "fully committed." Since most entering students tend to be "education failures," "given up," "get it together," "insecure" types, they perceive great personal risk in committing early to seeing the literacy training successfully through to completion. Students may provide themselves with an "escape hatch," just in case. While that hatch has obvious value to the student, it also may limit full involvement to the point that progress is impaired.

Some will make a total commitment. The successful program finds that delicate balance between overtolerance and inflexibility. It recognizes that extent of commitment is a legitimate concern but a genuine impairment. The program is structured so as to encourage growth in commitment while maintaining high expectation.

Impairments to participation

There are a number of other existing conditions that need to be recognized that bear on the student's ability to participate successfully. It is important to remember that illiteracy as an impairment does not exist in isolation; it nearly always exists in combination with other impairments.

Logistical impairments may include availability and cost of transportation. Life crisis impairments that affect participation include illness, death, incarceration, eviction, and termination of employment. They are real situations and must be acknowledged. The difficult decision confronting the project is to determine when the policies are too stringent and when they are too lenient.

Emotional impairments are not uncommon and vary from mild neurosis to psycopathic behavior. Each case must be weighed individually, but, outside of referral, psychological intervention is best left to the professional. Neurologically impaired students include the retarded and learning disabled. If the condition is accurately assessed, an instructional program can be considered which is specifically tailored, and if found appropriate, it can be implemented.

Perhaps the most significant impairment, and the one most frequently encountered, is the one resulting from the student's highly individually oriented (syntagmatic) language behavior. (Dinnan, Lodge, 1976). Unless this impairment is confronted, the student may be in for a long hard program.

It may appear on the surface that a rather negative view of the adult learner has been posited. However, what has been done is that program objectives have been identified, which are designed to recognize and cope with the participant's impairment so that the principal goal--literacy--can be achieved.

Coupled with whatever impairment there might be are many strengths, and it is upon these strengths that the foundation for a new and expanded literacy will be built. Chief among these strengths is the ability of students to perceive and think about their human experiences and to translate those perceptions into language. If students can talk intelligibly, they can write; if they can hear intelligibly, they can read.

But what has this to do with recruitment and retention? The answer is simply that each program must know clearly and accurately how it seeks to recruit and retain. In most cases, students will be difficult to recruit and retain, and much time will be required to give the program a solid street reputation.

Gaining community support

In the broadest sense the recruitment program begins by recruiting the community leadership. For illiterates to join the literate society, there must be a willingness of the society to open its membership. This community leadership recruitment campaign needs to be one-on-one, with program personnel meeting with power brokers. (Part VI deals with this question in more detail.) Both altruism and cost-benefit arguments are effective, coupled with arguments that support the project's credibility. Also, having a program brochure to present and an influential and visible board of directors or steering committee to call upon is important.

A media campaign is the next step. It reinforces the power broker recruitment effort and initiates the student recruitment drive. The campaign should be designed either by ad agencies or professional advertising associations. Radio and television public service announcements form the basis of the campaign, reinforced by bus cards, billboards, and printed media.

The first campaign may not recruit many students, but it is an important message to the illiterate population: "The door is open here." The program will be seriously handicapped unless there is an open climate. Since most illiterates feel very unique and isolated, the media campaign helps them to feel less threatened about being discovered.

The next aspect of the recruitment campaign will be one-to-one contact between the program staff and other human services agency personnel. Health, welfare, corrections, offender rehabilitation, education, and labor are all represented by case workers who have hands-on contact with illiterates. Where these professionals have established credibility with nonreaders, their recommendation will carry much weight.

Of course, there are many alternative channels of communication, including churches, schools, community organizations, and community leaders, but the greatest recruitment opportunity is in the reputation the program has in the streets. The reputation comes slowly, sometimes only after years of work. And it comes about because the program understands, respects, and protects the student--and it works. Graduates and participants will spread the word, if they believe it themselves.

Persistence and patience are essential recruitment campaign ingredients. A less than 2-year campaign is probably shortsighted. The sell has to be soft, and nonreaders have to identify with the ads. Using newly taught community people as advocates is a powerful strategy. September and February are good times for the campaign to peak.

The illiterate has been preoccupied with reading and learning to read for a long time; fear and uncertainty have been constant companions. Thus, when the media campaign begins, these issues will be in his mind. The first decision the illiterate will have to make is to take some specific and concrete steps--"go to a place," "call a number."

Whatever the step, it should be the focus of the media campaign. From then on, the recruitment is one-on-one, and it is up to the program to see that the student finds an environment conducive to survival.

Student retention strategy

The retention program must begin when the student first contacts the program. New students will relate to some program sites better than others. Obviously, transportation is an important consideration, but the "feel" of the site is the critical factor. Unfortunately, there is some history of poorly organized and managed "storefront" and itinerant, alternative education programs. Street people know this and will test the new program to see if it is solid, serious, competent, and dependable; so the location should project these qualities. The other extreme is too much institutionalization. Illiterates do not relate to traditional classroom settings. The best program avoids both extremes: It projects the feeling of being an expression of community concern and involvement without overpowering the student.

Also, it is most important that the program schedule be adapted to student needs. Hours should be flexible, covering day and evening.

For the most part, the students, particularly new male students, will experience a great deal of personal stress during initial contact. The staff person must be able to help them overcome this stress. If the project has a clear understanding of the characteristics of the client population, there should be no problems.

Go easy and slow and help the new student relax. Emphasize the program and recognize that each student is unique. Stress the fact that the program is flexible in content and learning rate, and that it is safe and patient. The purpose of the initial contact should be to agree to meet a second time.

The second contact should be scheduled with a counselor and should allow the student ample opportunity to share his or her feelings, hopes, and concerns. A nonthreatening, informal reading assessment can be made, particularly if it emphasizes the student's basic language facility--his or her strengths. At this point, the student should be encouraged to begin seriously considering committing to becoming literate. This process will vary from one session to 3 months, depending on the student. Some students may be ready for the first level of formal instruction while others may be capable of interacting only on a one-to-one basis with a tutor.

Dropping out. Most programs probably will experience a high student dropout rate at specific intervals: during the second to third week, at 3 months, and at 9 months. It is important for the project to accumulate this data and to act accordingly. A basic literacy program will have to follow up with students whose attendance falls short.

The first dropout point occurs early because students panic over the threatening prospect of failure. The second dropout point occurs because students have satisfied their ego that they are not stupid, thus, their motivation is reduced. It also may be because students feel that their progress has stopped.

If dropout occurs because of external agendas, students may find their way back into the program, but they must be encouraged not to let their prevailing mood on a certain day or week override better judgment. In the final analysis, the student must make the decision. The project must be able to differentiate between intervention that does the student's thinking and intervention that causes the student to think.

Learning to read well. This is a long, hard process for an adult nonreader. No program can succeed that does not recognize and act on this reality. Therefore, it is essential that new students be given a solid foundation on which to build their new literacy. This foundation-building strategy is the most important component of the retention strategy.

First, every new student possesses a very extensive and complex oral language base, even if it is not used. It is important to note that nonreaders lack awareness of, and confidence in, their existing capability. Thus, step one is to get in touch with the strengths.

Beginning readers need to deal with oral language as a confidence builder, as well as a foundation skill. Thus, the second step is to help students develop confidence in their ability to learn and acquire and assimilate new information. Students do a great deal of this in everyday life. The problem is that they do it unknowingly, and therefore, derive no self-confidence from the experience.

The strategies for this second step are legion, but need not, and probably should not, involve a lot of "reading." The program should be informal, nonthreatening, practical, and "everyday." Any kind of simple real-world learning experiences which the new student can master will serve to develop learning confidence.

Take it slow and be patient. New students are really learning about themselves; it will take a little time to absorb the new knowledge. The experienced teacher will be able to avoid going too fast or too slow. Your best teacher should be in this early instruction activity because good teaching and effective retention are synonymous.

Finally, hold off on the heavy reading instruction until the student has acquired an operational language base that will allow the new learner to classify new information and to relate time, quantity, quality, and space. The ability of young children to learn to read is developed by more or less formal instruction in reading readiness. Many adults display an apparent lack of these kinds of readiness skills, and while the instruction of adults is obviously different, there are striking similarities between the two conditions. (A useful reference is Adults Learn Again, Curtis Ulmer and James A. Dinna, State of Georgia Department of Education, 1981.)

As seen, the basis for effective participation is good preparation, but the retention program must be augmented with a counseling resource. We are not recommending psychological counseling, but rather educational counseling. Because of the acute pressure unique to this population, support and encouragement must be available, particularly at the crisis points, i.e., 2 weeks, 3 months, and 9 months. The best plans will not be 100 percent effective, but will have substantial success if the needs of this population can be distinguished from the needs of the typical and traditional postsecondary student.

III. GOALS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LITERACY PROGRAMS

This section raises critical issues regarding the goals of community-based adult literacy programs, pointing out that Federal monies have traditionally tied literacy instruction to employment. Although increased employability is obviously a goal of literacy programs, it has been suggested that other goals are extending the ability of individuals to understand, control, and effectively function within their social context.

Employment. Most community-based organizations have a prime objective: improve the adult's economic status through literacy education. However, critical issues have surfaced which involve achieving this objective.

Weber (1975) questioned whether or not literacy skills, in and of themselves, were significant in widening adult employment opportunities. She stated, "There is little to suggest they do. Basic education students, even though their numbers are small in relation to the job market can rarely attribute a new job to their new reading skills" (p. 150). The research of Dentler and Warshaver (1965) suggests that education does not create economic prosperity, but rather follows it.

It is interesting to note that the national survey conducted by Kent (1972) found that two-thirds of the adults in reading courses gave self-improvement, not employability, as the major reason for attending. Yet Federal legislation has traditionally tied literacy to employment. The stated purpose of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act was:

> to initiate programs of instruction for individuals who have attained age 18 and whose inability to read and write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to get or retain employment commensurate with their real ability...

For community-based organizations, employment is only one of the primary objectives of literacy education.

Functional competence. A literacy program goal has been to make students functionally competent to perform tasks required of adults in society. Greenfield and Noujeira (1980) noted that the Adult Performance Level (APL) Study greatly assisted in identifying the skills and knowledge an adult needs to be competent. The matrix on the next page shows the intersection of skills (reading, writing, speaking, etc.) and knowledge areas (consumer economics, health, etc.). To be considered functionally literate, an adult must be able to apply the set of skills to the set of knowledge areas.

Although Mezirow (1970) did not directly criticize the APL approach, his broad criticism of adult programs appear also to apply to APL. Mezirow suggested that for many adults, it was difficult life problems which often interfere with their education and vocational training.

MATRIX OF INTERSECTING SKILLS

	Consumer Economics	Occupational Knowledge	Health	Community Resources	Government and Law
Reading	Read labels on cans.	Read a help wanted ad.	Read first aid directions.	Read a movie schedule.	Read about your rights after arrest.
Writing	Fill in income tax forms.	Complete a job application.	Write a menu.	Complete an application for community service.	Write your congressperson.
Speaking, Listening, Viewing	Ask questions of IRS.	Listen to an employer talk about a job.	Listen to a doctor's directions.	Use the telephone.	Describe an accident.
Problem-solving	Decide which house to rent.	Decide which job suits you.	Decide when to call a doctor.	Use stamp machines in the post office.	Decide which candidate to vote for.
Interpersonal Relations	Relate to a sales clerk.	Be successful in a job interview.	Interact with hospital personnel.	Ask directions.	Interact with police successfully.
Computation	Compute sales tax.	Calculate paycheck deductions.	Decide how many times a day to take a pill.	Calculate the time it takes to travel a distance.	Calculate the cost of a speeding ticket.

Life Skills. Following Mezirow, Adkins (1973) suggested a curriculum approach, called Life Skills, which would focus instruction around the specific vocational, educational, and personal problems experienced by adults. Following are the major curriculum tracks and representative units in the life skills approach:

Tracks	Representative Units
1. Managing a career.	Identifying and developing one's interest and abilities, choosing an occupation, locating jobs, conducting interviews.
2. Developing one's self and relating to others.	Caring for health needs, presenting one's self effectively, dealing with conflicts.
3. Managing home and family responsibilities.	Becoming a parent, meeting needs of wives and husbands, budgeting and buying, dealing with the landlord, helping children in school.
4. Managing leisure time.	Planning one's time, changing mood and pace through recreation, participative versus spectator activities.
5. Exercising community rights, opportunities, and responsibilities.	Dealing with representatives of welfare, health, and employment organizations; handling discrimination, finding one's way around the city.

The life skills approach not only attempts to have the adult understand specific problems, but also focuses on translating learned knowledge into action. For example, a unit on controlling emotions might have adults role play an anger-evoking situation. The adults would exhibit application of acquired information into action by delaying anger.

To some, the life skills approach might evoke images of early counseling programs which attempted to socialize and assimilate immigrant adults. Rather than examining the social context and institutions which give rise to poverty, inadequate housing, and bad schools, such programs, it is contended, foster adjustment to the status quo and manipulation of it.

Conscientization. This is a theory developed by the Latin American educator Paulo Friere and is aimed at having oppressed peoples develop an understanding of the social context which shapes their daily lives and their ability to change it. In Freire's formulation, individuals gain control over themselves when they begin to articulate the reality of their existence. Freire's writings are difficult, but as Weber stated, "Freire has successfully called into question the training objectives that motivate literacy programs by placing people at the center of a cultural context in which making a living is more than holding a job" (p. 152).

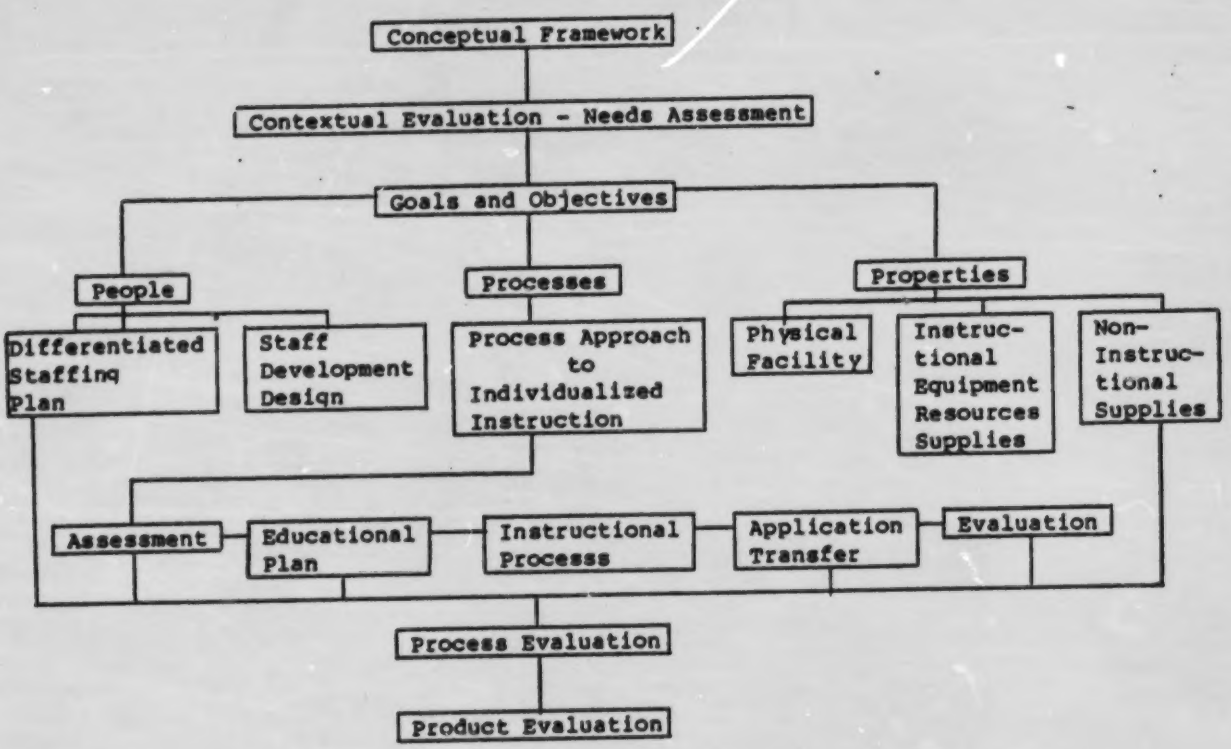
Obviously, there are many questions that could be raised about the Freire approach. Perhaps the most important is its transferability to the United States, for it must be remembered that this country's history, technology, economic structure, and social patterns are significantly different from those in Latin America.

Instructional objectives and evaluation

Because of a lack of consensus on the goals of learners, instructors, and administrators (Mezirow, 1970), community-based organizations are often limited in their effectiveness. The result is often high rates of attrition and low attendance.

Obviously, there is a need for an internal process of assessment to ensure that all agents--adult learners, teachers, and administrators--know the objectives, as well as understand the educational design required to accomplish them. Frequently, the lack of specific objectives results in neither learners nor teachers realizing when the programmatic goals have been accomplished. The following flow chart is a prototype process model which may be used to monitor program effectiveness.

LITERACY MODEL



Conceptual framework. It is extremely important that administrators and teachers generate the major theoretical underpinnings of their program. Too often, programs appear to be merely collections of materials, forms, and motivational techniques with little or no broad framework to give these bits and pieces meaning and unity. Following are seven examples of generally accepted concepts of the nature of the reading process which may form the foundation of a literacy program:

1. Reading is a developmental process, and all people can be viewed as being at some point on the developmental continuum.

2. Reading is an act of information processing during which the reader makes use of linguistic and experiential cues to extract meaning.

3. Reading is a cognitive process, highly influenced by the cognitive style and cognitive map (i.e., the manner in which the reader has uniquely organized information and attitudes) of the reader.

4. Reading comprehension is highly dependent upon the correspondence between the receptive languaging ability of the reader and the expressive language of the author.

5. Reading achievement is related to attitudes toward self as a learner.

6. Reading dysfunction among particular groups in the United States (e.g., blacks) is neither genetic nor congenital, but is highly related to their social status, as well as their comprehension of and access to the institutions affecting their lives.

7. Reading is a functional activity, needed by virtually everyone in today's society if they are to perform prescribed social roles (e.g., parents, workers, hobbyist, etc.).

Needs assessment. A popular criticism of public schools is that they exist in splendid isolation from the community they serve. The curriculum used in a wealthy suburban district may be the same one used in an impoverished school district, although the educational needs of the students may differ.

Every literacy program exists in a specific community, and it is vital that the needs of the community are assessed. To accomplish the assessment, leaders of other human services organizations--hospitals and health agencies, colleges and public schools, civil rights organizations, and employment bureaus--should be interviewed.

Goals and objectives. As previously pointed out, the literacy skills of communication and computation are applied to a set of knowledge areas. It is important that the staff move from broad objectives to the very specific

terminal behaviors that they wish adults to exhibit. The steps outlined in Preparing Instructional Objectives, by Mager (1962), may be used in helping the staff generate objectives.

People, processes, and properties. These are the means by which instructional objectives are realized. The instructional process is presented on the chart (p. 26) as a five-stage process with a planned evaluation at each stage.

1. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the level of adult literacy and specific areas of strengths and weaknesses.

2. The educational plan is based on the assessment and normally would contain the stated objectives, the teaching-learning strategies, materials to be used, and the criterion measure.

3. Four instructional processes are usually used: personalized help from a teacher; large-group activity; small-group work; and independent work.

4. The application stage seeks to have the adult transfer learned literacy skills to different adult knowledge areas. For example, reading skills might be applied to health materials.

5. Evaluation should determine the degree to which the instruction process has been successful. It is important that the evaluation reflect the educational plan. If the goal of instruction is to learn a specific set of vocabulary words, then those words should be tested, not words never taught.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING TARGET POPULATIONS

Educational sociologists have found that targeted populations for literacy programs fall into specific categories.

Self-directed adults. Mason (1978) defines self-directed adults as those who may not have finished high school but who are economically and personally secure. These individuals will seek out adult programs.

Severely underemployed and sporadically employed. To reach these individuals, Mason (1978, p. 58) suggests the following strategies:

- A link with agencies that provide individualized services for disadvantaged adults.
- Developed materials that are easy to read and can be personally delivered and explained.
- Developed media campaign that lends credibility to personal recruiters.
- Emphasis on publicity and personal contacts concerning what the program can do for people.
- Talks within the community to inform people of what the program offers, and an exchange that elicits what the community feels are its needs.

Stationary poor. This group has the greatest need and is often the group not reached by traditional adult programs, community colleges, and universities. The stationary poor feel powerless, lacking control over their own lives, living each day as it comes. They are the unemployed, the welfare mothers, usually lacking skills which would make them employable. Use of the media is not effective in reaching the stationary poor, and community people often must identify them.

Specialized target populations. Every community has specialized populations which are often overlooked by traditional programs. In New York City, for example, there has been a large influx of Haitians, Greeks, and Vietnamese. Not only is each group different, but each has its own particular internal communication network which must be understood if contact is to be made.

Public school dropouts. In many urban centers, an estimated 50 percent of the pupils fail to complete high school. One reason for many leaving school is illiteracy. It is interesting to note that until very recently public high schools rarely addressed problems of functional literacy, concentrating instead on success in the content areas of literature, social science, and mathematics. For example, reading instruction traditionally has aimed at solely improving reading ability in content areas.

Incarcerated. Anyone who has conducted a prison program cannot help but be moved by the enormous talent of many prisoners. The fact that prisons are better known as graduate schools of crime than as institutions of rehabilitation is a devastating comment, not on American prisons, but on American society. Prison authorities are not the easiest administrators with which to deal because their first concern is obviously security, not education. They often see the literacy educator as an interference, but they need to learn that literacy programs actually improve security by engaging inmates in productive activities.

Community-based agencies should establish linkages between themselves and other human services agencies if they are to identify targeted populations successfully.

Such agencies include:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Church groups
- Community organizations
- Comprehensive Employment Training Act State sponsors
- Correctional institutions
- Department of social services
- Ethnic organizations
- Farm groups
- Health services
- Immigration and naturalization services
- Neighborhood Youth Corps
- Organizations for community development
- Other educational agencies
- Private organizations
- Parent-teacher associations
- Service clubs
- Social Security
- Social service groups
- Special Federal and State commissions
- State departments of agriculture and consumerism
- State employment services
- State parolee commissions
- Veterans Administration
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Sororities and fraternities

V. MINIMIZING FAILURE

There will always be adults who fail to benefit from instruction, have sporadic attendance, and drop out of the program. The task, then, is not to eradicate failure but to institute specific tactics to minimize it. Such tactics include:

- Designing the educational program with the adult, based upon the intake interview and the assessment. Too often, goal-setting is solely the task of the instructional team, with little or no input from students.
- Instituting a variegated curriculum to meet the different needs of students. The following curricula were described in this paper: functional literacy, life skills, and conscientization.
- Employing a variety of instructional processes encompassing individualization: adults working independently, teachers providing personalized help, small groups of adults working on a common area of need, and large group activity.
- Counseling adults periodically to determine problem areas. Often, what seems to be an insurmountable problem might easily be resolved by the professional staff.
- Creating a student attrition committee which will address programmatic problems, assist in getting students back into the program, and help with future problems.

VI. STRATEGIES FOR MOBILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

(Several aspects of this topic were examined under Sections I and II.)

Selling universal literacy to a community as an abstract concept is easy, but selling it as an operational reality is very difficult. Part of the difficulty is the unfortunate reality that there are very few, if any, really effective and efficient models. There is a credibility problem. A really effective community literacy program is more a marriage than a sale brought about by the program staff sitting down with members of the community and designing an effective program.

Community leadership and power centers

Community leadership has as many forms as there are communities, but some principles do seem to apply generally in dealing with community leadership; they include the following questions:

- What are the various power centers in the community?
- How do they relate to each other?
- How extensive is the problem of illiteracy?
- What are the real tradeoffs to ignore it or deal with it?
- Is it possible to reduce the incidence of illiteracy in a significant way?
- Who should be responsible for the program?
- Who will see that these questions are raised, answered, and acted on?

Selling the community on the program begins with a serious collection of specific and well articulated data and includes an accurate assessment of the scope and nature of the community problem. The needs assessment should be followed with a description of the intervention program, and how it fits with existing human services and educational resources.

In examining the objectives for the community involvement program, one finds that the foremost objective is to build a consensus--just for its own sake--that illiteracy is a problem. Illiteracy can be reduced; there is a cost benefit, and the program deserves a priority.

A consensus on this issue will encourage cooperation, discourage turf guarding, and convey to the illiterate a sense that the community cares. Also, consensus can lead to financial aid, as community organizations supporting project objectives may be in a position to contribute much needed funds.

The question of overlapping responsibilities may arise. Ultimately, the answer lies in agreeing on who will assume responsibility for the problem. Cooperation is the key, and the needs assessment should show that all sides can contribute in solving the problem.

Probably the most accessible power centers are small groups of individuals in the community who are committed--for one reason or another--to the community's well-being. They are usually visible and active in civic affairs. They should be approached on an individual basis, listened to, and persuaded to embrace the advantages of effective intervention. This initial approach should be largely philosophical rather than operational. Go slow, be patient, and assume that initial efforts will succeed.

There is also a network of private sector agencies which should be contacted and enlisted, at least philosophically. They include, but are not limited to individual corporations, private individuals, private agencies, service clubs, churches, and the local chambers of commerce. Other power centers include:

Political subdivisions. There is an instinctive reaction to claim immunity from responsibility because of constitutional constraint. However that may be, each subdivision can contribute significantly. There is another reaction to take the position that, "If they're not going to, we're certainly not going to." Once that defense is breached, it can be turned around to say, "They did, why don't you."

Begin with the subdivision with which the project has the best rapport or which has traditionally been most active. Illiteracy is a very political issue, and the body politic must be involved. Carefully approached, each subdivision can offer ongoing financial support.

Educational community. No program can be successful without the encouragement and support of the larger educational communities. Each power center must be courted, listened to, and given full cooperation. Historically, these groups have been under attack, and the emergence of a literacy project has the potential for increasing public criticism of institutional education. Great care should be exercised to avoid name calling, finger pointing, or emotionalism.

The project has only one goal--solution. Funding support is unlikely, but possible. There is, however, an invaluable resource in technical assistance. It is essential for a community-based program to possess impeccable professional credentials. Hire good people because teachers make or break the project.

Community agencies. Any public or private community agency that deals with marginally functional people confront the effects of illiteracy every day. Agencies dealing with clients in the areas of health care, welfare, law enforcement, courts/probation, employment, housing, consumerism, and child care can identify prospective students. They also can often help through vocabulary development and psychological encouragement.

By working with community-based, ongoing agencies--which often have a degree of flexibility denied the legislatively mandated agencies--the program will broaden its base of support and further reduce the turf-guarding issue. Once the linkages are established, however, they will tend to weaken unless they are maintained.

Subdivision leaders. Even though political subdivisions have been approached, it is important to contact individuals within the subdivision. Mayors, aldermen, commissioners, State representatives, and congressmen and senators who have constituents being served by the program will have a personal interest. Since illiterate people are politically impotent, it is important for the elected official to come to them at the instructional center. Advocacy is always strongest on a one-to-one and personal basis.

Government departments. Finally, there are a number of departments of the Federal Government which have a presence in some way in the community. These agencies tend to have relatively little interaction between themselves, but a community-based organization can be a catalyst, advocate, and convincer, both for ongoing departmental programs and for possible cooperation between separate initiatives. Governmental departments are sometimes sources for financial support, but are always potential advocates for literacy instruction.

The initial contact with each power center will be largely informational. Ongoing contacts will begin to develop real cooperation and coordination, but any active community involvement will collapse unless it is continually maintained.

Newsletters, informational meetings, and personal contacts are essential. Starting the program is a unique problem; but maintaining it depends largely on success in instruction. Operation must be objectively evaluated, and the results disseminated.

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ADULT BASIC EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: THEIR DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

Dr. K. Owen McCullough surveys adult educational strategies--from the multilevelled, GED-oriented Adult Basic Education program and the labor-intensive Adult Reading Academy program to clientele-oriented, campus-based basic skills programs and independently funded and administered programs. He describes the role of the adult basic education teacher, as well as clientele characteristics; expounds various learning theories and their adaption to adult basic education; cites instructional techniques and materials; and predicts for the 1980's "exciting" changes in adult education.

I. BACKGROUND

"What a piece of work is man!" said Shakespeare's Hamlet. "How noble in reason!" Yet, since before and after the 16th century, some people have always been considered less "noble in reason" than others. These were the people who built the Egyptian pyramids, block by block, supervised by an overseer who was just a bit more "competent" since he knew where the blocks should go. These also were the people who, using picks and shovels, dug the American barge canals of the 19th century. They were directed by gang leaders who, themselves, were managed by superintendents, who, in turn, were supervised by still others--each with differing, more comprehensive, more generalized "competencies." These were the people who chopped cotton in the Old South and built railroads and the Empire State Building. These were the people--these <u>are</u> the people--whose most singular competence is to keep a strong back and arms bending, pulling, and lifting.

But there is little need for such people in a computerized, cybernetic, technological society. Now, even a strong body and a willingness to work must be coupled with a certain degree of more generalized "competence." This competence is the ability to communicate through the rather complicated symbology of written words and numbers; the ability to "sell yourself" to prospective employers, keep a job in an era of rising unemployment, manage one's own finances, live in harmony with one's neighbors in even closer proximity as the world shrinks in the face of overpopulation and interdependence.

These are the minimum competencies demanded today of everyone. To have them is to be "functionally literate," an all-encompassing concept derived from a long list of concepts evolving at least from the late 1960's. These concepts--such as basic literacy, survival skills, coping skills, minimum performance levels, minimum competency, employability, basic skills--imply one's worth, dignity, perhaps even nobility. To be functionally literate is to be "OK." To be functionally illiterate is to be in need of treatment, to be "not OK."

Adult Basic Education levels

As the concept of functional literacy evolved, so too did the response of the Federal Government. Long before the Adult Basic Education Act of 1964, it was recognized that millions of adults had somehow escaped the net of mandatory public education. In an economy, however, which could still easily absorb the unschooled and unskilled, an economy of "piecework" and nonexistent mandatory wage laws, such a labor pool was not a problem. Laborers were trained on the job at wages low enough that businesses and industries could absorb the costs of minimum supervision and inevitable mistakes. But as technology demanded more worker sophistication, and as minimum wage laws made workers more expensive, the pool of unschooled and unskilled could no longer be absorbed. Federally funded, State-directed, and locally administered adult basic education was deemed an answer to the problem.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) was originally a program essentially similar to the public school curriculum, except that it was divided into three levels. Level I was to provide illiterate adults with the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills usually developed by children in grades one through four. (Plato called these preliminary learning skills.) Level II corresponded roughly to grades five through eight. In level II, adults were to improve their reading and writing skills and be introduced to mathematics, literature, and social studies. Level III was to cover the essentials of the high school grades nine through 12 curriculum. It was really preparation for the General Education Development (GED) examination, but with primary concentration on reading comprehension. (Many "adult learning laboratory" personnel discovered, in fact, during the late 1960's and early 1970's, that if they could raise the reading comprehension level of adults to at least the ninth-grade level--through heavy doses of programmed learning--those adults could almost be guaranteed to pass the GED. This, of course, is still true.)

To ensure emphasis on levels I and II in ABE, no Federal money was appropriated for level III. Local ABE programs were to use their Federal dollars to eliminate adult illiteracy. But the adult illiterate is a hard person to teach, even a harder person to find, and still a harder person to retain in a program. Adult illiterates have learned to hide their "handicap." They have developed elaborate coping mechanisms. Illiteracy is embarrassing, and illiterates, obviously, seek to avoid embarrassing situations. Most of them "failed" in school, not realizing that the schools also failed them. School, therefore, is not a pleasant place, and teachers discover what is wrong with you rather than what is right with you.

ABE teachers were (and are) overwhelmingly "moonlighters" drawn mostly from elementary and secondary schools and trained to deal with mythical homogeneous classes with predictable, similar experience levels. Elementary teachers had the edge over secondary teachers in that they were at least used to ability grouping within classes, but neither the elementary nor the secondary teachers were prepared to individualize the instruction of each person in class. And even those who did try to individualize instruction were too tired from their day-school classes to make a sustained effort. ABE classes, especially in the early days of the program, tended to be continuations of day classes--materials, curricula, teaching techniques, even the buildings and the furniture were the same. It was assumed that adults who missed the public school experiences merely had to have that experience.

ABE and the GED carrot

For adults with the GED certificate as their goal, this assumption was nearly correct. They would endure youth-oriented teachers far more than their lower-level classmates. They had a tangible goal, and the teacher was instrumental to that goal. They were motivated and not difficult to teach. Tired teachers could give little effort and still be successful. Consequently, dropout rates became exceedingly high in ABE. The dropouts were those who needed the program most, the level I adults, those who likely had not been able to "keep up" with their classes when they were children and who now found themselves unable to "keep up" with their adult class, a "class" supposedly designed to serve them exclusively.

ABE programs across the nation, not by design, but by chance, became associated with GED preparation, even though it was supposedly illegal to expend Federal money for level three. The GED certificate became the carrot held out to entice adults to attend ABE classes. (What tangible item could be used to entice level I adults?) Ever since the original Johnstone and Rivera study, Volunteers in Learning, it was known that the more education an adult has, the more likely he or she will want more education. The converse, of course, is also true. Because of the high dropout rate, "recruitment" and retention" became the dominant ABE themes of the 1960's and 1970's. And predictably, both recruitment and retention were most successful when coupled with the GED carrot. Level I adults remained predominately hidden and insulated.

The original intent of the ABE program was never fulfilled. Illiterate adults would seldom come to class, and if they did come, there were no adequate materials for them to use. There were few teachers prepared to teach them, and there was no tangible reason for them to be there. (In 1968, one creative, retired elementary school teacher in Georgia decided to try teaching adult basic education in her rural county. From 1968 through the early 1970's, she had the highest recruitment and retention rate in southern Georgia. She was admired, respected, and loved by her level I adult students. Her secret: She had known them or their families for more than 60 years, having been reared with many of them. She also owned and operated a farm, and she always promised each of them a bushel of corn if they stayed in class the full 120-day session!)

From its inception ABE has had some remarkable successes, but also too many failures. Untrained teachers, inappropriate materials, untrained and indifferent local supervisors, and no career-ladder incentives have combined to become the "tragic flaw" of the original ABE program--a laudable, necessary program, but a failure in eradicating adult illiteracy.

II. NEW PROGRAMS FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Perhaps in response to the apparent failure of ABE to reach the masses of illiterate adults, the Federally funded Adult Reading Academy program was started in 1974. An outgrowth of the public school "Right to Read" program, the Reading Academy program was specifically developed for only "functionally illiterate" adults age 16 or older. To receive a Federal grant for an Adult Reading Academy, an agency had to develop a comprehensive proposal which targeted the specific population it would reach, the techniques it would use for serving that population, and its plans for recruiting community volunteers.

The academy program was to be inexpensive, and very few administrative staff members were allowed. Some financial commitment had to be guaranteed by the receiving agency, and only volunteers were to be used for teachers. Most of the money was to be spent on appropriate teaching materials and staff promotion and recruitment activities. Teaching was to be one-to-one, preferably at a time and place convenient to the adult.

ABE and Reading Academy conflict

Highly sensitive State ABE directors and local ABE supervisors looked upon the program as duplicating theirs and, therefore, in competition with them. As they came to recognize the true mission of the program, they realized that it served a clientele who had either dropped out of ABE or who had never even entered ABE. Successful academy students, however, would very likely be candidates for ABE programs because they could only remain with the academy until they had achieved a fourth-grade reading level. Success in the reading academy would prepare them for success in ABE. But conflict over territorial rights led simply to truces, with each program operating as if the other did not exist.

Revealing the unique character of the academy program is the following description taken from the brochure of an academy in Tennessee:

> Community volunteers are recruited and trained to provide free, private, individual reading instruction to any adult, 16 years of age or older, who is functionally illiterate. Each student is assisted to learn to read effectively according to his or her needs. Each curriculum is individualized, centering on the interests, life style, and goals of the student.
>
> Each adult student who enrolls goes through an initial intake process, a specified sequence of events designed to provide information necessary for the development of his or her reading curriculum, the purpose of which is to assist the individual in becoming a functionally literate, effectively living adult. During the initial interview with the Student Coordinator, the student's specific reading skills and grade level are determined by two formalized tests: the Reading

Section, Level II, of the WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test) provides a standardized reading grade-level score; the READ (Reading Evaluation-Adult Diagnosis) identifies the student's reading competence in such areas as readiness, alphabet knowledge, sight vocabulary, word attack and analysis skills, and reading and listening comprehension. Everyday life coping needs are assessed by the Academy's Informal Coping Skills Inventory.

Personal information, such as the student's aspirations and occupational goals which have implications for teaching, is gathered in the initial counseling interview. The Counselor, in addition to assisting the student to articulate these goals, records this information and identifies problems in the student's environment which may be barriers to participation and learning. The Counselor refers the student to appropriate agencies when needs unable to be met by the academy are identified.

Student support is offered through quarterly followup contacts with the student by the Counselor, posttesting and re-evaluation of the student's goals and progress, and referrals to other appropriate agencies. The academy also holds several fundraising drives throughout each year to earn money for various supportive services unavailable through outside agencies. An example of such service is the provision of eye exams and eye glasses for those students who need them in order to learn to read but who cannot afford them.

The volunteer reading tutors (unpaid) are recruited from the local community. Each volunteer attends an orientation during which illiteracy and the academy approach are discussed in detail. Those volunteers who then decide to help another adult learn to read sign a Volunteer Agreement which commits them to provide reading instruction to one student for 2 hours a week for a period of 6 months.

After a short waiting period, the volunteer is matched with a student; matching is based on mutual availability and other criteria such as personal backgrounds and personality traits. During their first meeting, the tutor administers the Academy Informal Coping Skills Inventory in order to secure important information concerning the student's ability to apply reading in everyday tasks--such as using the telephone directory, reading a want ad, or understanding highway signs.

Information from the three sources--the student's reading abilities and deficiencies as measured by the WRAT and READ; information gathered by the Counselor concerning the student's goals, interests, and problems; and the student's coping skills ability assessed by the Informal Coping Skills Inventory--is used to develop the curriculum outlined in the student's Suggested Reading Program (SRP).

Tutor training is scheduled immediately after the initial tutor/student meeting. This training session (lasting approximately 2 1/2 hours) gives the volunteer tutor instruction in those teaching methodologies, basic skills materials, and coping skills supplements most suited to and needed by the student. In other words, this training is tailored to the needs of each tutor/student pair. Materials are selected specifically for the individual student and their uses demonstrated to the tutor.

Each volunteer and student meet for lessons 2 hours a week at a minimum. Tutoring takes place whenever and wherever it is convenient for the student. Whenever possible, employed adults are tutored at their job sites where reading-for-job skills information is readily available. Each adult learner is taught to read what is most important for his/her immediate needs.

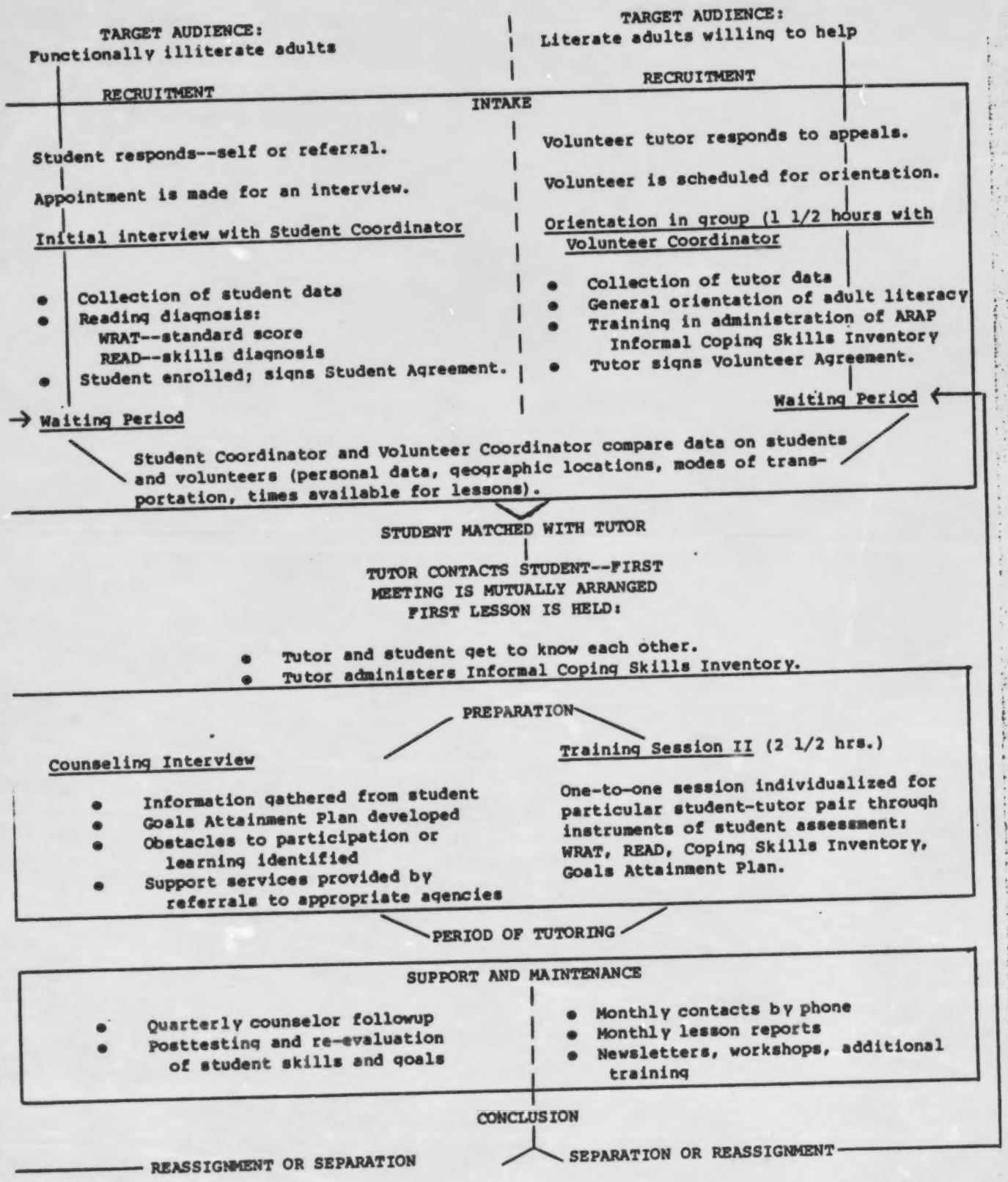
The staff supplies ongoing support to the tutor as well as the student. Consultation and retraining are available anytime for tutors. Other tutor support efforts include regularly scheduled workshops--on such topics as teaching techniques, materials, and common problem areas experienced by tutors in the field--bimonthly newsletters, and monthly phone contacts.

(On the following page is a graphic model of the Adult Reading Academy Program.)

Anyone who studies the model and who has even an elementary acquaintance with ABE, can immediately see that nothing is duplicated from the ABE program. The Adult Reading Academy, one can say, augmented ABE or supplemented it, and may even have logically <u>preceded</u> it, but certainly did not duplicate ABE. Notice once again the distinguishing characteristics of the Adult Reading Academy: 1) the use of volunteer tutors instead of paid teachers; 2) one-to-one instruction rather than classes; 3) complete diagnosis of student strengths and weaknesses; 4) curriculum and materials tailored to the student's needs, personal goals, and major interests; 5) interaction with other social service agencies to connect the student with resources which help reduce the barriers to a student's learning process; 6) the extensive use of counselors; and 7) delivery of the program to the student at the most appropriate and convenient time and place.

The academy program was extremely labor-intensive and as much concerned with the effectively developing a student as it was with cognitive development. The program emphasized developing positive, personal relationships between the tutor and the student, peer relationships which recognized and sincerely believed in the OK-ness of each, and the fact that each person involved had unique characteristics and strengths. The program revealed that when the relationship concerned reading, one knew more than the other, but when other topics or interests developed, the roles may and often would reverse. The tutor was merely a person willing to help another learn to read, and the ability to read did not automatically establish one's superiority over the other.

ADULT READING ACADEMY PROGRAM MODEL


TARGET AUDIENCE:
Functionally illiterate adults
TARGET AUDIENCE:
Literate adults willing to help
RECRUITMENT
RECRUITMENT
INTAKE
Student responds--self or referral.
Appointment is made for an interview.
Initial interview with Student Coordinator
• Collection of student data
• Reading diagnosis:
WRAT--standard score
READ--skills diagnosis
• Student enrolled; signs Student Agreement.
Volunteer tutor responds to appeals.
Volunteer is scheduled for orientation.
Orientation in group (1 1/2 hours with Volunteer Coordinator
• Collection of tutor data
• General orientation of adult literacy
• Training in administration of ARAP Informal Coping Skills Inventory
• Tutor signs Volunteer Agreement.
Waiting Period
Waiting Period
Student Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator compare data on students and volunteers (personal data, geographic locations, modes of transportation, times available for lessons).
STUDENT MATCHED WITH TUTOR
TUTOR CONTACTS STUDENT--FIRST MEETING IS MUTUALLY ARRANGED
FIRST LESSON IS HELD:
• Tutor and student get to know each other.
• Tutor administers Informal Coping Skills Inventory.
PREPARATION
Counseling Interview
• Information gathered from student
• Goals Attainment Plan developed
• Obstacles to participation or learning identified
• Support services provided by referrals to appropriate agencies
Training Session II (2 1/2 hrs.)
One-to-one session individualized for particular student-tutor pair through instruments of student assessment: WRAT, READ, Coping Skills Inventory, Goals Attainment Plan.
PERIOD OF TUTORING
SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE
• Quarterly counselor followup
• Posttesting and re-evaluation of student skills and goals
• Monthly contacts by phone
• Monthly lesson reports
• Newsletters, workshops, additional training
CONCLUSION
REASSIGNMENT OR SEPARATION
SEPARATION OR REASSIGNMENT

Basic skills education

The academies are virtually gone. They have become Adult Basic Skills Centers within new Federal guidelines, but they have retained all of their former characteristics except that they have expanded their curricula to embrace all aspects of functional literacy. The demise of the academies, then, was not brought about by their failure, but by their success. Using the same administrative structure, the same emphasis on volunteer labor and peer relationships, continued linkages with other social service agencies, and the same portability of programs to the learner, they have become truly a success story for what were formerly classified as level I adults in basic education. And they have stimulated interest anew in level I adults by traditional adult basic education programs, brought about in part by the admission that ABE traditionally served adults who were most easily served, most motivated and higher up on the educational ladder.

Basic skills education for adults is the new catch word in adult basic education. There is hardly an education conference one can attend without hearing discussions of adults who need basic skills, of programs that provide basic skills, of teachers who teach basic skills, or of agencies who provide funding for basic skills.

Basic skills education also has now become part of the function of comprehensive community colleges, State technical institutes, area vocational schools, some junior colleges, and a growing number of 4-year colleges and universities, such as Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee, the College of Southern Idaho, Lesley College in Massachusetts, and others. Even major universities, such as Johns Hopkins, the University of Tennessee, California State University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Southern Maine, and many more, have established campus-based, externally supported basic skills centers. These were originally conceived to serve as demonstration schools where faculty could do research, curriculum and techniques could be developed and tested, students could gain practical teaching experience, and adult clientele could be served.

Although these objectives are still ostensibly the purpose of campus-based centers, the emphasis has now shifted almost exclusively to serving clientele, and student tutors are greatly outnumbered by community volunteers. Campus-based centers receive facilities and budget management expertise from universities, and have truly become arms of the universities. They reach out into the communities, dealing directly with agencies, helping people who, for the most part, will never become university, degree-seeking students. And through Federal support, they are establishing a semblance of autonomy.

University purists frequently grumble about whether such centers ought to be identified with the university if they are not directly serving a higher education function. But the centers have discovered many friends within the university communities; quite often faculty members and administrators volunteer as tutors. Indeed, some centers even serve the occasional college or university student who is unable to cope with introductory English or math courses at the freshman level. (This is not, however, an advertised function of the skills center, unless it was set up directly to serve students unprepared for college curricula.)

Basic skills programs now dot the American landscape. They are sometimes part of current adult basic education programs; but more frequently, they are independently funded and administered programs, receiving Federal school district or United Way agency funds.

Moreover, professional educators no longer dominate the basic skills personnel ranks. Lay citizens are in the forefront, volunteering time not to a program but to a cause. They are linked with others whose single commonality perhaps is the desire to help others help themselves. These are from various professions and occupations, retired people, students, the most literate and the barely literate, the very rich and the very poor.

They operate out of places such as Volunteers of America of Los Angeles, the Urban Coalition of Metropolitan Wilmington, Del.; Literacy Action, Incorporated, Atlanta, Ga.; the Opportunities Industrialization Center, Atlanta, Ga.; the Alternative School Network of Chicago; the National League of Cuban Americans of Fort Wayne, Ind.; Literacy Volunteers of New York; Solidaridad Humana, Incorporated, New York; the Columbus Basic Skills Unlimited Academy of Columbus, Ohio; the Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority of Morristown, Tenn.; the Indochinese Refugees Social Service program in Alexandria, Va.; the Literacy Council of Alaska in Fairbanks; the University of Tennessee Adult Basic Skills Center; and thousands of churches and synagogues. An offensive on adult functional illiteracy has begun in American society, and lay people are the frontline soldiers.

III. INSTRUCTOR ROLES AND CLIENTELE CHARACTERISTICS

Perhaps more true in adult basic education than in any other specific education program areas, (such as secondary education, higher education, and technical education,) the content of what is to be learned must be determined by the dynamic interaction of the learner and the teacher with the available instructional materials. Adult basic education programs are still voluntarily attended, and, except in the case of external criteria--such as the GED examination mandates mastering of specific content—ABE clientele determine their learning goals. They and their instructor determine specific objectives and decide together which instructional materials are the most effective in helping the learners achieve those objectives. The materials are a means to the objectives; the objectives are a means to the goal. The instructor, in the truest sense, must be a facilitator of learning, helping learners reach goals in the most efficient manner, tailoring content and teaching technique to the unique goal of each learner.

Instructor qualities

The instructor is instrumental to the goal of the ABE learner, and successful ABE instructors are comfortable with this role. They are not autocrats, gatekeepers, disciplinarians, or upholders of externally derived standards. They are nearer to counselors as a profession than they are to stereotypical classroom teachers. Their relationship to the learner is a predominately helping one and their expertise is more in process than in content. They must be able to analyze the articulated goals of learners (what learners <u>want</u> to achieve) and determine what learners <u>need</u> to reach their goals. Instructors must be able to develop specific objectives for each need, create instructional sequences for each objective, and help learners through the sequences with efficient adult learning strategies (explained in a later section of this paper). Simultaneously, they must also assess and reassess each step of the process, and constantly strive to maintain the morale and perserverance of each person involved.

In telephone interviews of administrators, teachers, and tutors in basic skills and ABE centers across the country, the following comments were made to the question, "What qualities do you look for in a tutor or an instructor of adults?"

From Alaska: "A good tutor keeps his students' immediate and long term personal and vocational educational needs foremost by teaching skills and developing lessons geared to helping the students meet these needs. A good tutor makes creative use of available instructional materials and develops their own material where applicable."

—Bonnie Brody
Literacy Council of Alaska

From Florida: "Good teachers need patience, empathy, sensitivity. They can't be anxious, overbearing, or demanding."

--John Fuller
Orange County School Board

"The people who work best for us are indigenous people, people from the population we are trying to serve. They don't have to have technical knowledge, but they do have to be skilled at working with others."

--Olga Garay
Partners in Learning

From California: Good teachers must be adaptable, must be good at both group and one-to-one instruction, must be good at helping learners develop positive self-concepts."

--Herbert Thompson
Corona-Norco Unified School

From Tennessee: "A good tutor is a friend and a peer. Learners need tutors who can be proud of them. Tutors cannot be easily frustrated."

--Tom Kroll
Adult Basic Skills Center

"Instructors must be willing to give much psychic energy. They must be open and flexible. They must believe that the world of illiteracy and poverty is truly another world and that those who live in it are victims of a society they never learned to cope with."

--Steve Lowery
Adult Basic Skills Center

"Tutors must believe in the genuine qualities of their students. They have genuine qualities that are so admirable. They can do many things that so many people can't do. Tutors must look for their strengths rather than their weaknesses. They must build

on those strengths. Some of their students have never received positive reinforcement. In this program, they get the reinforcement they never had."

--Barbara Lide
Adult Basic Skills Center

"Tutors must be able to convince the students that they can learn. The tutor's job is to help them learn."

--Tom Salter
Adult Basic Skills Center

"Literacy work is like the tarbaby. Once you get into it, you can't pull loose from it!"

--Kathy Aycock
Adult Basic Skills Center

From Wyoming: "Tutors or aides or teachers must be person-centered rather than subject-centered. They must be concerned about the feelings of those they are working with. We'd rather have someone less prepared academically than one who is not a caring, sensitive individual. The people we serve need much personal help, much tender loving care. They have not developed personal work habits. They have learned well how to fail."

--Carol Arnold
Laramie County Community College

These and similar comments from Illinois, Indiana, and New York confirm the importance of personal qualities over academic or technical competence for basic education instructors. It was also expressed that instructors from an adult learner's own peer group are as successful and sometimes more successful than trained teachers. Peer group instructors or tutors are role models. They are tangible evidence that people can rise above difficult circumstances, and they tend to feel immediate empathy for those in situations from which they, themselves, emerged.

Clientele Characteristics

The most important part of the adult basic education process is the adult learner, a person who typically has been described as undereducated, unskilled, disadvantaged, culturally deprived, culturally inferior (and ..

unique), functionally illiterate, and poor. These negative terms make it easy for an ABE instructor to unwittingly ascribe negative characteristics to ABE learners. An instructor who sees these terms as being synonymous with "slow learner" is not likely to believe sincerely that adult students are capable of much more than learning minimally how to read, write, and use basic arithmetic. Such instructors treat adult students as juveniles. They patronize them, create dependency in them, deny them the opportunity for growth, and ultimately lose them; in doing so, they fulfill their original prophecy--that ABE students are not very capable.

The self-fulfilling prophecy is a powerful psychological phenomenon which can work either for or against an adult learner, and since there is no evidence which shows that the ABE student population is mentally inferior to model American society, there is every reason to believe that they <u>can</u> succeed.

Certain characteristics of ABE clientele, however, do have considerable impact on the teaching/learning environment. Being general, these characteristics do not typify each ABE learner, but they do provide the ingredients of the major problem of each ABE instructor.

ABE clientele are mainly products of a distinctive cultural milieu which has within it unique value priorities, behavior patterns and expectations, and survival strategies. Generation after generation of poverty, social isolation, and low social status have produced a hard core of American poor with low self-esteem, unmarketable skills, little or no future orientation, and lack of motivation and self-confidence. They distrust education, but are as capable of learning as any other population segment.

For them, just to enter an ABE program is a heroic step. It incurs the suspicion of their peers and possible hostility of spouses. It breaks the day-to-day routine and asks them to prepare for a possible tomorrow that they had never even considered before. It is a big, frightening step from which they will retreat at the slightest provocation. Sadly, only a small minority of millions of potential ABE clientele has taken it.

Understandably, these students are tentative, nervous, anxious, unconvinced, and definitely uncommitted, and perhaps tired from a full day's work. They see the ABE program as possible entry into a better way of life. They usually know what they <u>want</u> but are rarely able to articulate what they <u>need</u> to achieve their wants. They desire tangible items, the abundance of which can be acquired with higher-paying jobs or with better management of their present income. They are highly utilitarian, desiring to use their time to gain useful knowledge and learn applicable skills. A successful ABE instructor always makes certain that whatever is being taught has been "approved" by the learners as having direct applicability to each of their needs. This is part of what is meant by the phrase "tailoring instruction to the student's needs."

IV. LEARNING THEORIES ADAPTED TO ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

The study of learning theories and theorists has been part of the educational preparation of nearly every teacher who ever graduated from an accredited college of education. The names of David Ausubel, Albert Bandura, Jerome Bruner, Robert Gagne, Donald Hebb, Clark Hull, Carl Rogers, and B. F. Skinner, to name a few, have been memorized by thousands of prospective teachers at every degree level. Their principles have been evaluated in light of specific learners and subject areas. It is doubtful, however, that teachers a year or more out of college can remember very much about either the theorists or their theories.

For example, in an unpublished study done by this author of doctoral level students in a graduate course in instruction, only the names of Dewey, Skinner, and Rogers were recognizable. According to the graduate students, Dewey was the proponent of "learn by doing," Skinner was the "discoverer" of the power of immediate reinforcement, and Rogers emphasized the need not only to have empathy for students, but also to recognize and use their individual differences. These were close approximations of the positions of Dewey, Skinner, and Rogers, but those of other learning theorists could not be recalled.

The doctoral students had done what most professional educators have done: they had taken what they have found to work from whatever group of theorists that they have studied, and they have developed an eclectic, pragmatic teaching strategy unique to their own personality characteristics.

Learning theory themes

To be fair to the learning theorists, however, it seems justified to briefly review their dominant themes, at least those which appear to be most useful in adult basic education. If those theorists were talking to adult basic education instructors, here is what they would surely say:

- David Ausubel: "Organize the material to be learned in a manner most relevant to the learners. Tie the material to real-life situations. Be sure that the adult learner is ready to learn, that prior prerequisite knowledge is present, and introduce the material at the appropriate knowledge level of the adult."

Adult educators, knowingly or not, use Ausubel a great deal, especially in basic education. They know that adults usually learn best when the material has immediate utilitarian value, when they can see its relevance to their lives. They know also that adults have a busy schedule and are reluctant to give time to material they already know. Adults also usually do not want to go beyond a knowledge level they cannot use.

- Albert Bandura: "Don't assume that there is only one right way to do something. Introduce adults to many alternatives and let them choose from among those alternatives. Be a role model for your adult students. If they are to be continuing learners, you must also be a continuing learner. If they are to be excited about learning, you must be excited."

Too often, dogma and boring instruction experienced by adults in their youth destroyed their curiosity to learn. Learning became like castor oil which nobody liked but everybody was forced to take. Adults are reluctant to come back to such situations.

- Jerome Bruner: "Nothing can be taught unless one renders what is to be taught worth knowing. In all instructional situations, two roles must be played -- the teacher and the learner. Each has a responsibility, but the learner is ultimately responsible for his or her own learning."

Educators realize that adults must be convined nearly everyday that what they are learning is worth their effort. They must see progress, not to the instructor's goal, but to their own goal. Therefore, instructors are to help them reach their goal, but cannot reach the goal for them.

- Robert Gagne: "Develop specific learning objectives mutually with each adult, and recognize that for every learning task there is a hierarchy of knowledge which precedes or supercedes that task."

Educators must take adults where they want to go, but they must also be able to analyze what is to be learned so that they can help adults acquire the knowledge or skill to reach the objective.

- Donald Hebb: "Break the knowledge or skill into separate components and teach them first."

This is sometimes difficult because adults want to proceed directly to their goal. Therefore, the components must be shown to be an integral part of their goal.

- Clark Hull: "Before attempting to help an adult learn, remove all competing stimuli."

The learning environment must be free as possible of internal and external distractions. An adult distracted by personal problems or who is physically uncomfortable, is not ready or even willing to learn. Educators must recognize that staying on the learning track is not always possible, that sometimes all that can be done is to help the adult deal with something unrelated to the course content.

- Carl Rogers: "Each adult is unique, a bundle of unique experiences which make him or her different. Learn to respect those individual differences. Develop empathy for those differences. Accept them in a genuine, sincere manner."

All adults want to be accepted, and acceptance is different from tolerance. No adult wants to be tolerated! Adult educators use the individual differences of their students to help enrich the learning atmosphere. Adult basic education is more than silent classrooms with each adult working at a specific learning task. It is also a program in which social skills are developed, and ideas and experiences shared.

- B. F. Skinner: "Reinforce only desirable behavior, and reinforce such behavior immediately."

Differences are always easier to see than similarities. Professional educators have been trained to detect what is wrong rather than what is right. Adults, however, learn best by building from one small success to another. Undereducated adults especially are used to being told how wrong they are, and it is surprising how quickly they respond to an atmosphere that accents how right they are.

Learning theorists usually concentrate research on easily accessible populations. Piaget, for example, concentrated on children; Skinner on small animals, particularly birds; Gagne on school children and members of the armed services. From observing these populations, theorists develop or test hypotheses, which become theories as the hypotheses are substantiated. The theories, then, are reported, and educators everywhere and in every program area draw inferences from them, especially as the theories are found to be useful and adaptable to other learning environments.

Eclectic learning theory

Adult basic education, like some other educational programs, does not have its own specific learning theory. What has appeared workable in theory has been adapted and adopted by ABE instructors, and what has emerged is an eclectic body of theory loosely called adult learning theory. A good example is J. Roby Kidd's book, How Adults Learn, which Kidd, himself, would not describe as a theory-generating book. Adult basic education is a field of practice, not a field of research, encompassing an array of strategies gathered from theories found most applicable to adults.

This is not to say, however, that ABE teachers practice outside the two dominant learning theory classifications--stimulus response theories and Gestalt-field theories. In fact, ABE instructors are overwhelmingly practitioners of Gestalt-field theories. The stimulus-response theories are seen as too mechanistic for adult learners. They treat learners as single-response organisms. Single stimuli which require single, specific responses do not consider the mediating influences of the learner's past experience, motivational factors, or whatever else the learner brings to the learning environment.

Gestalt-field theories, by nature, recognize the learner as an active, mediating part of the triumvirate--learner/content/instructor. Instructors using Gestalt theory spend a great deal of time ensuring that adults understand not only what is to be learned, but why it is to be learned, and how it is related to their goals. Each adult becomes aware of his or her present knowledge, which can be used as a foundation for his or her learning goal. Upon those individual foundations, the instructor helps the adults build whatever knowledge and skills are required to reach their goals.

To reiterate: There is no dominant learning theory used in adult basic education. There is a composite of learning theories that have been woven together, blended, and modified until they now reside as a set of principles in the arsenal of strategies which every successful adult educator brings to the learning environment. They are logical principles which can be taught quickly, even to lay volunteers without an education background. It matters not that the derivation of those principles has been forgotten by most of those who use them, since experts in learning theory do not necessarily make the best instructors of adults. Something far more intangible makes good instructors.

Perhaps what is most intangible is that course content does not dictate what is to be learned in adult basic education--adults do. Adult basic education instructors are not gatekeepers, nor are they certifiers of accomplishment or credit, nor do they follow specific curriculum guides. They are people who help adults learn what they need to learn to do what they choose to do. That is their foremost responsibility.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

Within the various, current education levels in American society, adult basic education is the most homogeneous in both the materials and the techniques used. Overwhelmingly, instructors use commercially produced print material for content, and the instructional role they adopt is one of helping learners master the content. Seldom do teachers present new material or lecture. They individualize the learning process by using high interest material appropriate to the learner's needs. If commercial materials are not readily available for a particular learner's interest, teachers will then utilize whatever is available in the learner's immediate environment, i.e., job-oriented, neighborhood-oriented, or community-oriented print material.

A national telephone survey to determine the extent that multimedia hardware and programs are used in ABE, showed quite low usage. However, the results should be of no surprise, given the nature of both the typical ABE learner and the learning task. These were the results in a random selection survey of 20 State ABE programs or basic skills centers. The results also include commercial material use:

TYPES OF EQUIPMENT OR MATERIALS USED IN CURRENT ABE AND BASIC SKILLS PROGRAMS
(20 programs surveyed)

Equipment or materials	Number of Programs Reporting Use
Commercial Print Materials	20
Teacher Made Materials	20, but only as supplementary
Language Masters	12
Tape Recorders	12
Filmstrips	9
Films	4
Videotape Recorders	1
Computers	1
Games	1
Television	0

Although this survey cannot be generalized to the hundreds of other ABE programs and basic skills centers, it provides (in this author's opinion) information about the current general trend. There were many reasons given for not using equipment or "canned" programs. One reason was that learners are not sophisticated enough to treat such items as useful learning tools. Another reason was the general lack of appropriate materials. A comment

regarding this was, "It's kind of hard to get teaching films or filmstrips that directly relate to the Alaskan environment and the typical Alaskan ABE student." Still other reasons were the lack of portability of such equipment or programs and the general lack of expertise among the teachers or tutors in using them.

Personal interaction

The major reasons given, however, related to the perculiar nature of the adult basic education teaching/learning environment, which emphasizes the quality of personal interaction between teacher and learner. ABE teachers must be highly adaptable individuals, being able to seize upon the many teachable moments that arise within the learning process. Simultaneously, they must be aware of the very delicate commitment most learners have to the idea of learning and being helped to learn.

Hardware and "canned" programs are impersonal. They cannot make learners believe in themselves, adapt to the unique personal needs of the learner, or develop personal regard and friendship for the learners. And even though developing basic knowledge and skills is the only measurable mission of ABE, perhaps what is ABE's most important mission is rebuilding and strengthening--even restoring--the many human psyches that have been "weighed," in the biblical sense, and have "been found wanting." It is a dual, difficult mission, one which cannot be fairly evaluated if the only criteria used are reading gains, or numbers of people who have completed certain content areas, or any one of a dozen other ways programs can be quantitatively measured. And it is also a delicate mission, depending heavily on compatability and sensitivity of personalities.

Teaching literacy cannot be done by the timid, aloof, or by those who feel superior. It can only be done by those who are ready to "give until it hurts"--in Mother Teresa's words--by those who can dedicate and rededicate their lives to adult learners, just as a Tennessee staff did a few years ago:

In Memory of
John Tucker
An A.R.A.P. Student
Whose Determination To Learn To Read
Was An Inspiration To His Tutor
And Those Who Knew Him
1978

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 1980's

It would be simple to look at the 1980's in adult basic education from the perspective of the 1970's and simply extrapolate from that decade and say, "What we did in the 1970's we will continue to do in the 1980's." Extrapolation is one way to peer into the future, especially the short-term future, because it is safe to say that a population of 25 million functionally illiterate adults in 1981 cannot all be trained to function at minimum levels by 1990. Indeed, as the complexity of society increases, perhaps even at a geometric rate, minimum functional requirements will rise, not fall, thus adding to the functional illiteracy rate, regardless of the efforts of ABE to reduce the rate. Extrapolation can also point to the gloomy financial picture for adult education--indeed most of education--in 1981 and easily predict continuing financial problems. In other words, extrapolation merely extends growth and decline trends usually for short time periods, and predicts that what is growing will continue to grow, and what is declining will continue to decline.

Generally, in adult education there are increasing numbers of nontraditional students involved in credit as well as noncredit programs. There is also an increased use of instructional technology. Extrapolation, therefore, can predict continued growth in adult education. But in adult basic education, a subset of adult education, stagnation has set in, mainly because of government-mandated budget cuts; thus, extrapolation can only predict future stagnation.

Creating the future

Another way to look at the future, however, is to create a scenario. The past to a person of this futuristic persuasion does not predict the future. The future is born everyday, and what predicts the future is what is done or not done today to create it. This method of futures prediction is advocated by what may be called the "create-the-future" futurists.

Looking at the 1980's from a create-the-future stance, one can predict exciting changes for adult basic education, possible changes for which the expertise already exists. All that is needed is the will to make them happen.

- A career ladder for adult basic education teachers will be developed in every State, thereby creating fulltime ABE teaching positions with all professional benefits and requirements such as certification and mandatory continuing education. This will practically eliminate the constant problems associated with part-time, moonlighting, untrained, tired teachers, and it will surely boost the morale of teachers who truly want to make a professional commitment to ABE.

- New areas of instructional technology will be developed and used, such as microprocessors and video discs that will not take the place of the instructor but will help learners at basic cognitive levels where repetition and rote memory are important. This will free instructors to give more time to teaching at higher cognitive levels where attitudes and values more readily emerge.

- Functional illiteracy will virtually disappear. It will be recognized as a handicap and a result of society failing individuals who, in turn, fail society. Eliminating functional illiteracy will provide a new role for adult basic education, that of helping adults cope with constant, complex change, as well as helping them become independent learners.

- Lifelong learning will become a way of life with ABE and a permanent part of the entire educational spectrum. Education will not be looked upon as a "thing," but as a process through which adults efficiently learn whatever they deem necessary to learn.

- Adult basic education will cease to be predominately a nighttime activity. Because of flexible work schedules and cooperative relationships with business and industry, adults will be able to participate at their convenience, and ABE programs will be there to serve them.

The 1980's will be an exciting decade, a <u>desirable</u> prologue to the decades to come. An army of ABE teachers, staff, tutors, lay people, supervisors, and directors can be counted on to move ABE out of its 1981 doldrums. Another army of engineers and technicians are now at work perfecting new technology. All that is needed is the unifying determination to take responsibility for creating a predictable, desirable ABE future.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF INSTRUCTORS OF ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Waynne B. James provides some answers to the questions regarding finding, hiring, and training instructors of adult literacy and basic education programs. She considers the need for quality instructors, the role of instructors, where they can be found, required qualities and competencies, selection criteria, and required training and/or preparation. She also discusses several innovative training approaches and products. She sees the instructor of adults in the 1980's as having a combination of technical and humanistic skills effected by training which addresses both content and process needs.

"Every adult illiterate, every school dropout...is an indictment of us all."

--Jimmy Carter, qubernatorial inauqural address, January 12, 1971

I. INTRODUCTION

The reported number of adults with literacy problems differs from source to source. However, according to U.S. Department of Education school completion estimates, 54 million people fit into this category. The National Council on Adult Education (NACAE) estimates that the number may be as high as 65 million. Competency-level estimates reported by the Adult Performance Level (Final Report, 1976) imply that 57 million adults lack the competencies necessary to function adequately in society.

"It is within our power to transform the situation; but the price will be a large one and the task will not be easy" (Kozol, 1980, p. 101). A part of the solution is to prepare instructors for adult literacy and basic education programs. This paper is an attempt to present some quidelines for identifying, selecting, and preparing these instructors.

The term instructor is used to represent a facilitator of the learning situation. Similar terms--i.e., teacher, trainer, facilitator, inservice coordinator--could be used synonymously, depending on the setting of the instructional programs.

The problems of adult literacy and basic education instructors are related, to a large extent, to several factors specific to characteristics of this field. For example, although some adult literacy and basic education programs are required, most adults attend on a voluntary basis. Adults in this instructional setting are generally very heterogeneous, with physical and sensory differences due to age and socioeconomic and ethnic differences. They also have different educational and vocational experiences, ability level, motivating factors, and feelings.

One other factor which complicates adult literacy and basic education problems is that most of the instructors teach parttime; their outside responsibilities are often greater than their instruction activities.

This paper seeks to contribute insights into the problems associated with instructors of adults. It provides some answers to questions that administrators or directors typically ask about hiring and training instructors for adult literacy and basic education programs. The paper considers these questions:

- Why is there a need for quality instructors in adult literacy and basic education programs?
- What are the roles of these instructors?
- What competencies are needed by the instructors?
- What is unique about working with adults?
- Where can potential instructors be found?

- What criteria should be considered in selecting instructors?
- What training and/or preparation is necessary for instructors?
- What are some of the more innovative projects/products available for training?

II. WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTORS IN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Quality instructors are extremely vital in adult literacy and basic education programs. Crucial issues involve the students' self-concepts and expectations of new learning experiences. Program instructors must be concerned with much more than mastery of any one subject area since adults have numerous factors impinging on their classroom existence. Instructors who set the stage for a new learning experience necessarily must incorporate a special sensitivity for the student who is entering a program for the first time. An adult's self-concept as a learner and his or her expectations of what a learning environment is have roots in past experiences. These past experiences must be considered as that unique frame of reference each student brings into the learning arena.

It is not enough for an instructor to ascertain each student's functioning level. Literacy and educational levels can be misleading when not considered within the framework of the adult's previous experiences as they relate to other structured learning activities. Aside from learning disabilities, physical problems, and other obvious impairments to learning, the adult's expectations, based on previous learning experiences, must be considered, since self-concepts are developed as a result of past successes and/or failures.

As the adult learner is introduced to the learning experience, the instructor must ensure that the new experience is different from past experiences. Since first impressions often determine whether or not a student returns, the introduction must set the tone of an open, nonthreatening atmosphere. It is imperative that the student understands that it is not the instructor's responsibility alone to determine what will be learned or how it will be learned. Students must assume responsibility for their own learning and become increasingly more self-directed. If the instructor's role is one of support, assistance, and guidance, the chances of the learner feeling any stigma or alienation can be minimized, and the learner will be more likely to remain in the classroom.

Quality instructors who understand and practice these points will gain the trust and respect of adults and, in turn, will be able to encourage student learning positively. Good instructors keep a program operating, and without instructors who attract and retain students and who help them achieve desired goals or skills, there will be no continuing program of value.

Genetic background and the environment contribute to the diversification of adult interests, preferences, and skills. These, in turn, create a wide range of adult needs and wants. Each learner has a rich experiential background which can be used to relate current learning to older, more familiar concepts. In addition, the variety of different experiences within the classroom can provide a wealth of information from which learners can grasp new ideas.

III. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS?

The general responsibility of an instructor is "to challenge the learner to move to increasingly advanced stages of...development" (Cross, 1981, p. 43). The instruction process is one in which an instructor arranges the conditions to facilitate learning by the adult. The process may require the instructor to serve in various capacities, such as a dispenser of information, guide, encourager, clarifier. The instructional process consists essentially of setting the climate or preparing the environment, then arranging experiences in an instructional model:

- Where is the student? (diagnosis)
- Where is he or she going? (objectives)
- How will he or she get there? (strategies)
- How will he or she know when he's (she's) gotten there? (reassessment)
- How well did we do? (evaluation)

Because of unique factors, the setting for adult literacy and basic education programs encompasses different needs and demands and different approaches and skills than does traditional education. The primary roles assumed by adult literacy and basic education instructors are the same as those assumed by all instructors; however, instructors of adults need to emphasize certain aspects of these roles to a much greater extent. Each role has various functions or skills that accompany it, and fulfilling each role demands that the instructor function in various capacities. Because these roles are not mutually exclusive, there is much overlap.

Four basic roles

The four basic roles and responsibilities of adult instructors are: educator (which includes the functions of expert, formal authority, and facilitator); counselor; friend; and administrator.

Educator. The expert transmits information, possesses necessary knowledge, and knows more than the learners in a particular area(s). In general, he or she is the presenter of information, organizing and presenting content material. Specific skills required are the abilities to listen, to answer learners' questions, and to prepare presentations. This function--one traditionally emphasized in public school education--is significant in teaching adults as well; however, other functions are more significant. It is important to stress that the instructor is more than a dispenser of knowledge. Too much lecture defeats the ultimate purpose of learner participation.

Formal authority also is traditionally emphasized in our public schools; but in adult learning situations, it takes a secondary position. A person who functions as the formal authority is responsible for setting goals and establishing procedures for reaching them. Specific duties include evaluating performance, which sometimes requires testing or defining standards of excellence in other ways. One reason this function receives less emphasis in adult education is that adults tend to take increasing responsibility for setting their own goals and determining if those goals have been met.

Probably the most vital function an instructor of adults can perform is that of facilitator. The facilitator promotes creativity and individual growth towards dependence on self as opposed to dependence on others. A facilitator helps design and arrange conditions in such a way as to help overcome obstacles to learning while drawing out and improving the learners' capabilities.

A facilitator's most vital skill encompasses the concept of individualizing instruction. Individualized instruction is <u>not</u> one learner working alone; it is <u>not</u> dependent on gadgetry or media; it is <u>not</u> a one-to-one relationship; nor is it a particular organizational structure or a particular type of learner. Individualized instruction is a philosophy and a process of teaching that provides for learner differences--in ability, learning rates, backgrounds, and goals. It depends on providing alternatives, using individual standards rather than group standards, translating into practice the instructor's philosophy, and employing instructor flexibility.

To implement these concepts, the facilitator must practice integral aspects of the process: Know the person on the other end of the process--not just what can be observed but what is beneath the surface; hear and see what the learner is telling you by what is said, observed, or not spoken; be committed to the individual learner as opposed to the content to be learned; and put oneself into the process so that it is a personal matter, not a mechanical step-by-step ritual. Facilitators who utilize these skills and who support the individualized instruction concept truly design and arrange the conditions so that learners can benefit greatly from the instructional process and become increasingly self-directed.

<u>Counselor</u>. As a counselor, the teacher clarifies for individuals goals and/or career paths and provides personal counseling. Typical counseling skills include listening, clarifying, and serving as a confidant(e). For adults, this role is often vital, since they often encounter conflicting responses to learning needs. The counselor's role basically is that of a helper, providing guidance for adults in meeting their academic, personal, social, and economic needs. This role becomes more important if the system lacks a counselor, since the counselor helps to convey a sense of excitement and value towards learning. Instructors must demonstrate constantly that it is worthwhile to commit personally to the process of education in general and to students in particular. In adult education, this is also an important role because adults need to find someone to serve as a role model, to respect, and emulate.

Friend. Perhaps the most important teacher role is that of friend--merely being human. It is extremely vital that instructors be viewed as trustworthy, warm individuals who accept students as they are rather than continually condemning them. Acceptance validates each person's existence. To adults who are often fearful of a learning situation or additional failures, acceptance and encouragement may often make the difference between continuing or quitting.

Administrator. A final role is administrative in nature and consists primarily of managing nonacademic areas and recordkeeping. It includes maintaining written records, possibly recruiting students, promoting community relations, or possibly supervising teacher aides. Many teachers consider this role trivial, but administrators feel that it is vital to program functioning.

IV. WHAT COMPETENCIES DO INSTRUCTORS NEED?

Before considering how to identify, select, and prepare teachers, it is important to consider the competencies needed by adult literacy and basic education program instructors. A review of some of the more important and pioneering research on instructor competencies follow.

Most research related to adult educator competencies centered on general adult education programs. Identification of these competencies began with a study by Chamberlain (1961), who pinpointed 45 competencies for practicing adult educators. Practitioners rank-ordered Chamberlain's items according to their importance for the general field. The resulting statements were used to develop a set of objectives for a curriculum in graduate adult education.

Liveright (1964) worked with a theoretical framework developed by William McGlothlin to arrive at competencies of graduates of adult education programs. Liveright's five competencies were:

1. Competence to practice one's profession
2. Social understanding
3. A philosophy and set of values which make effective practice possible
4. A zest for continued study
5. Competence in conducting and interpreting research

In another work that dealt with general competencies of adult educators, Grigsby's (1974) study focused on developing a competency-based program for community education personnel. Community education refers to all types of educational services for adults; thus, it requires general adult educator competencies. Grigsby's study identified 87 competencies which were rated by individuals in 11 service areas, i.e., offerings designed to provide a specific service to a specific population. The results revealed no significant difference in ratings among service areas, except for extension educators who felt that student evaluation was not critical to their job.

Competency-based education (CBE) related specifically to adult literacy and basic education is in a relatively early developmental stage. Although numerous studies have been conducted, none (as with all competency-based work) has been validated in an actual instructional setting. A discussion of several of these studies follow.

Fenn (1972) identified a list encompassing knowledge, skills, understandings, and attitudes needed to achieve minimum effectiveness in an adult education teaching situation. Thirty-four competency statements were rated according to importance by a selected and random sample of teachers, students, county administrators, State department of education personnel, and professors of adult education in Florida.

Aker's (1974) review of CBE literature concentrated on competencies which were deemed most crucial to effective teaching. The competencies were identified by research on learner performance and teaching effectiveness. Aker limited more detailed information on teaching strategies to six competency areas. According to Aker, an effective adult literacy and basic education teacher must:

1. understand the nature and mission of adult education;
2. be aware of and sensitive to the characteristics, problems, and interests, and needs of students;
3. apply behavioral science principles to create optimum conditions for adult learning;
4. acquire skill in designing a functional and relevant ABE (adult basic education) curriculum;
5. select appropriate learning materials and apply adult education methods; and
6. be a continuous learner.

Mocker (1974) conducted a study to identify, classify, and rank competencies needed by ABE teachers. His study was divided into four phases. Phase I consisted of compiling numerous items representing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors deemed important in ABE. The compilation resulted in a list of 605 statements derived from 61 different documents. In phase II, the list was reduced to fewer statements, using a jury to validate the results. Phase III entailed creating an inventory with each statement classified into one of four categories (scope and goal of adult education; curriculum; ABE learner; and instructional process). Phase IV consisted of mailing the inventory of 291 competency statements to a national sample of ABE personnel. Some 234 individuals responded, and their ratings resulted in a division of competencies into high- and low-priority items within each of the four categories.

Kreitlow (1974) and a group of 25 ABE teachers identified 38 exemplary ABE teacher competencies. The competencies were grouped into the following five broad categories:

1. Teaching techniques
2. Use of materials
3. Use of community resources and facilities
4. Student-teacher relationships
5. Assessment of academic outcomes

General competencies

The list of competencies that follow represent broad general areas that instructors of adults should possess to be totally proficient in the instructional setting. Obviously, the mastery level will depend on past

training, length of experience, and commitment to instruction. These areas were identified by combining Mocker's list of competencies into broader statements and asking professionals in basic education to rate through comparison the importance of these items (James, 1976). An effective teacher has:

- the ability to design appropriate instructional experiences for the ABE student;
- the ability to apply an understanding of learning theories and learner characteristics in teaching-learning, or counseling situations;
- the ability to establish effective interpersonal relationships with students;
- the ability to provide guidance, or counsel, to ABE students;
- the ability to evaluate students in teaching-learning or counseling situations;
- the ability to manage learning activities;
- the ability to develop a curriculum in ABE;
- the ability to apply knowledge of the general field of adult education in performing his (or her) or other roles as a teacher;
- developed a personal philosophy of adult education;
- a mastery of the subject area(s) taught (e.g., math, coping skills, problemsolving);
- the ability to continue developing professionally; and
- the ability to perform administrative tasks associated with ABE programs.

V. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT WORKING WITH ADULTS?

Much of what constitutes "qood teachinq" for adults is directly related to "qood teachinq" for youth. However, there are certain differences that make workinq with adults unique. Also, it is imperative that certain adult characteristics be accepted and dealt with because the relative importance of activities is maqnified by life roles and past failures.

The most commonly accepted theory of teachinq adults (Knowles, 1980) deals with the concept of a learner-directed atmosphere. The instructor's responsibility is to help or facilitate, focusinq on skills and the learninq process. Learners, themselves, provide input and assume some responsibility for decisions affectinq their learninq. For example, learners participate in the planninq process by diaqnosinq their needs, settinq qoals, and evaluatinq progress. Also, there tends to be more emphasis on individual learninq projects and/or independent study.

Traditional education has focused in the past on teacher-centered methodoloqy and transmittinq content. In general, teacher-centered situations imply a dependence of the learner on the teacher to make decisions, set qoals, provide information, and evaluate progress.

This is not to say that one approach is qood and one is bad. Both approaches can be viewed as opposite ends of a continuum; the one used is dictated by a particular clientele or setting.

Maturity, experience, and motivation

The most important characteristics to consider when teaching adults focus on areas related to maturity, experience, and motivation. Knowles (1979) believes that the qreatest differences between adults and children are prevalent in certain areas which have many implications for other areas related to adult learninq.

Self-concept moves toward independence in adults compared to the dependent posture of children. Self-concept is the sinqle most important factor affectinq behavior, and as adults qain confidence, they tend to become more self-directed and take increased responsibilities for their learninq.

Experience qreatly influences adult learninq because the amount and quality of experience that adults possess is much qreater than that of children.

Readiness to learn is evident in adults in relation to problems, responsibilities, and life cycle changes. Adults are not as easily motivated by curriculum or subject orientation as children are. They are motivated to solve problems, help meet responsibilities, and adjust to changes in their stage of life.

Adults seem to have an urgency to learn, manifesting an awareness that time is "running out." They want learning to be immediately applicable and practical, whereas children feel that learning is something to be used and applied at an indefinite time in the future.

Adult learning orientation is problem-centered and demands experiential methodology rather than subject or content orientation. Simulations, role play, problemsolving group processes and projects, and self-directed activities are effective adult learning activities.

Adults are motivated by internal needs rather than by external elements, such as rewards or grades. Research reveals that most adult learning occurs to help solve problems, to enhance one's self-esteem, or for self-fulfillment.

A recent research study team (Oberle, 1981; Offill, 1981; Price, 1981; Woody, 1981) has attempted to identify the principles under which adult learning ideally occurs. After an exhaustive review of existing literature and research and a synthesis of the available information and validation by experts in the field of adult learning, nine basic principles were identified:

1. Adults maintain the ability to learn.
2. Adults are a highly diversified group of individuals with widely differing preferences, needs, backgrounds, and skills.
3. Adults experience a gradual decline in physical and sensory capabilities.
4. Experience of the learner is a major resource in the learning situation.
5. Self-concept tends to move from dependence to independence as an individual grows in responsibilities, experience, and confidence.
6. Adults tend to be life-centered in their orientation to learning.
7. Adults are motivated to learn by a variety of factors.
8. Active learner participation in the instructional/ learning process contributes to learning.
9. A comfortable supportive environment is a key to successful learning.

Adults do learn and can continue to learn. Although the rate of learning declines, the capacity to learn remains or can be improved and enhanced with continued use. This implies that adults do well under timed tests, but problemsolving, synthesis, and reasoning abilities also remain strong.

Because there is a gradual decline in the physical abilities of adults as they age--their energy level, visual acuity, hearing ability, and movement are affected--a comfortable physical environment is needed to accommodate these changes.

Supportive environment

Adults desire a psychological atmosphere that is supportive, caring, and warm and friendly. The adult learner not only needs to feel respected as a unique person, but also needs to feel that he or she is learning something worthwhile and beneficial. The climate of the instructional setting, including physical and psychological aspects, often determines whether or not the adult returns to class.

Different role responsibilities and life cycle crises create a variety of differences in adults. These responsibilities and crises significantly affect the learning process by promoting or detracting from the need to learn.

While children are having theirs molded and shaped, the attitudes, values, and interests of adults, more or less, have been formed and internalized. These attitudes must be respected, and they can be changed, but only within a supportive, nonthreatening environment.

Both genetic and environmental backgrounds contribute to the diversification of adult interests, preferences, and skills. These, in turn, create diverse needs and wants among adult learners. Each learner has a rich experiential background to draw upon to relate current learning to older more familiar concepts. In addition, the variety of different experiences within the classroom can provide a wealth of information from which learners can grasp new ideas.

The required competencies and the underlying principles involved in working with adult learners create the need for instructors who can operate effectively in the classroom setting. Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to the many questions related to finding and/or preparing instructors who meet these requirements. Also, the diversity of organizations in which programs are based complicates the problem. For example, literacy programs are offered not only through public school systems--ABE--but also through community colleges, businesses and industry, volunteer literacy programs, and the military. Although there are many similarities in how programs are conducted, they vary extensively in their presentation, philosophy, or support. Some programs require students to pay, some are free; some are required, others voluntary. Some teachers are paid, others work for free; some courses deal with all subject areas, others concentrate on a single topic. Some classes have set meeting times, others are open entry/open exit; some courses are in urban areas, others in rural locations. All in all, the various settings present a mixed array of possibilities and problems that must be dealt with.

A common problem facing programs and administrators is identifying and selecting class instructors. Obviously, it would be impossible to present one comprehensive list of suggestions for every class variation; however, certain generalities are possible.

VI. WHERE CAN POTENTIAL INSTRUCTORS OF ADULTS BE FOUND?

Although finding instructors may be troublesome, they can be recruited at several common sources: public schools, volunteer programs, civic groups, colleges of education, community colleges, or churches. Also, actively advertising programs may both attract good prospects and publicize programs.

Public school teachers may make good instructors for several reasons. For one thing, they are already trained to be instructors, and they generally have one (or more) content specialities. In instances where a subject specialist is necessary, secondary public school teachers should be good prospects. All locations have teachers available for nighttime, weekend, or summer work. Obviously, classes conducted during the day would cause conflict unless the position was fulltime. Access to teachers can be achieved easily through the school systems, teacher groups, or PTA's/PTO's. A warning on using public school teachers: There is some evidence that they tend to treat adults the way that they treat elementary or secondary students. This may cause problems if teachers are not provided with some basic training to work with adults.

Community colleges and other community-based programs might be sources for instructors. The community college's staff or part-time faculty may be willing to serve as instructors, and student or faculty wives or husbands also could be considered as potential instructors. In addition, deans or department heads may have lists of people interested in this type of work. The network of community involvement should provide an excellent source for instructors.

Colleges of education could be another good source of potential instructors, as students being trained in various areas might be willing to work to get additional experience in teaching. Also, the placement office might have access to certified teachers seeking work. Again, student or faculty spouses might be a source of instructors.

In addition to being a possible source for instructors, civic and volunteer groups (garden clubs, Rotary, and Lions) can also help publicize programs. In fact, even if the groups, themselves, do not produce any potential instructors, some members may know qualified individuals. Obviously, actively pursuing such groups possibly can provide many benefits.

Students who have already completed an adult literacy and basic education program tend to make excellent instructors. Peers seem to know instinctively how the adult feels since they, themselves, have experienced the same feelings, thoughts, and concerns. Although peer instructors may lack formal training, their ability to empathize, combined with appropriate inservice training, should promote success with adult learners.

VII. WHAT CRITERIA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR SELECTING INSTRUCTORS?

Administrators often select instructors intuitively, hoping that they can trust their own judgment. Although there is no simple answer to the selection process, certain guidelines can be offered. Obviously, required information will vary according to the setting in which the instructor will be placed. But if the person will be teaching only English, specific evidence of mastery of English will be more important than if the individual would be teaching a variety of subjects.

Alonso (undated) presented some potential, pertinent areas for inclusion in a teacher hiring guide:

- A suggested list of basic knowledge and skills which a competent literacy teacher should have.
- Suggested ways of interviewing candidates for jobs, including interviewing techniques, ways of discovering social or cultural biases, questions to ask concerning background knowledge or adult learners or teaching methods of philosophy.
- Note on what and how to get useful, supplemental information on prospective teachers, such as recommendations, sample lessons, and writing samples.
- Suggested ways of observing and evaluating teacher performance once the candidate is hired.
- Suggested cues for detecting areas for added training.

It is vital to consider several of the 12 competency areas (Section IV) when hiring instructors for either a specialized or general position. The two most important areas are ability to relate to the student and mastery of the subject area (or areas) to be taught. As mentioned, if the prospective instructor will be teaching only math or reading, it is a fairly simple process to check on courses, degrees and/or certification in that area. If the candidate lacks this background, proficiency tests are available through a wide range of sources.

For instructors who will be required to teach various areas simultaneously, it is more important that they have exposure to numerous subject areas rather than concentration in one. Background in teaching reading should be a strong asset to the instructor since many adults attending basic education courses are either unable to read or have great difficulty in doing so.

Asking the right questions

The ability to relate to adults appears to be the most difficult to judge. Surprisingly, adequate observation and some simple questions may provide sufficient information on which to base a decision. For example, noting such factors as whether the individual seems friendly, appears enthusiastic, smiles a lot, or is just generally pleasant would indicate some positive support. On the other hand, if a person is curt or unfriendly, it is a tipoff that there may be a problem.

One director asked a series of questions of prospective instructors which, on the surface, seemed self-defeating because anyone could give the answer the director "wanted" to hear. However, most people tend to answer honestly and, thereby, provide some decisionmaking information. Some possible questions might be: "How do you get along with your coworkers?" "Do you find them helpful?" "What do you like best about working with people?" "What is your philosophy about teaching?" If the individuals truly dislike working with others or if they cannot accept others as equals, their responses will tend to give them away.

Additional questions to discover background experience and/or creativity might include the following: "If money were no object, how would you ideally set up a class of _____ for adults?" "What do you think is an ideal arrangement for classes for adults?" To probe for social or cultural biases, one could use "What if..." type questions, such as: "What if you were teaching a unit on nutrition and a black (or native American) said, 'But we can't stand potatoes that are not fried'?" (The students would have been told by the instructor that too many fried foods are not good for them.)

Similar questions, such as: "What would you do if you couldn't understand your students' language?" Or, "How would you respond if a student who belonged to a cultural minority called you at home and accused you of playing favorites to others in class?" Obviously, the interviewer can use a number of ideas to evaluate a candidate's background knowledge and possible social bias.

It is also important to note that while certain skills are vital for successful teaching, some of them can be quickly learned while others take more time; still others probably cannot be mastered, or changed, for a long period. Survival skills, such as instructional design and management, or basic reading skills, can be learned fairly quickly while mastery of subject areas probably takes longer. And the capacity and ability to relate to adults is generally something ingrained that would take a very long time to transform.

One suggestion is that directors look first for a "people person," someone who can relate well to adults and accept them as they are and not look down on them. If unconditional positive regard is present, mastery of subject areas can be assessed. Finally, depending on whether the individual has instructional design skills or knowledge of reading skills, some initial training can be provided to supplement existing skills.

VIII. WHAT TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE NECESSARY AND AVAILABLE FOR INSTRUCTORS?

From the moment new instructors are hired to teach adults, they generally have no idea of what to expect or what is needed to deal with students effectively. Preservice training, when it exists, consists largely of "administrativia," or filling out forms and reports.

In reconsidering the competency areas mentioned, it is important to note that there must be a distinction between "survival" skills--which are necessary for the initial entrance into the classroom setting--and more advanced skills for refining the instructor's proficiency. Ideally, with minimal preparation and various materials, any instructor can handle the first class meeting adequately. To begin with, each instructor should be acquainted with the unique characteristics of the adult learner as well as the special traits of the undereducated and/or disadvantaged adult. In addition, the instructor needs a familiarity with available materials, knowledge of informal diagnostic and placement techniques, and some specific hints on how to handle the first session. One of the classic resource books in adult literacy and basic education is Teaching the Disadvantaged Adult by Curtis Ulmer (1969). A more current version (Ulmer and Rennen, 1981) is Adults Learn Again.

Grabowski (1976) identified eight different models for inservice training programs for teachers of adults:

1. Laboratory approach
2. Classroom experience
3. Teaching demonstration
4. Self-directed learning
5. Team-structured
6. Inquiry-based learning
7. Independent study
8. Self-learning-related models.

According to Grabowski, these models offer "possible alternatives for the planner seeking to accommodate to the resources as well as the needs of the teachers."

Grabowski (1976) in his book, Training Teachers of Adults: Models and Innovative Programs, discussed seven selected innovative programs. The programs, with objectives and type of training, are:

	PROGRAMS	OBJECTIVES	TYPE OF TRAINING	CONTACT
1.	Apperception-Interaction Method	To learn the process of teaching and materials development to teach coping skills	Teaching-writing workshop, problem-inquiry	AIM Word Education 1414 Sixth Avenue New York, NY 01109
2.	Teacher-Tutor Pair	To develop a model tutoring program for ESL	Readings, discussions, observations, and editing/adapting written plans	Dr. Doris Moss Program Director TTP - Career Development Program New York Board of Education 130 Clinton Street Room 700 Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
3.	Culturally-Oriented Teacher-Education Modules	Improved teaching effectiveness through increased cultural awareness and ethnic understanding	Readings, self-analysis, and field observations	Department of Higher and Adult Education Teachers College Columbia University New York, N.Y. 10027
4.	Telelesson Teacher Education Series	To increase basic competence as adult educators	Videotape offerings, readings, individualized learning activities, and research of contemporary problems	ABE/TV Project Adult Education Section Maryland State Department of Education P.O. Box 8717 -- BWI Airport Baltimore, Md. 21240
5.	Problemsolving and Peer-Instruction Andragogy	To provide well worked out examples in problemsolving and peer-instruction	Simulation	Dr. Richard Suchman Human Resources Research Organization 27857 Berwich Drive Carmel, Calif. 93921

	PROGRAMS	OBJECTIVES	TYPE OF TRAINING	CONTACT
6.	Louisiana Adult Education Staff Development Project	To provide basic training experience to adult teachers with no formal training	Small-group instruction and multimedia presentation	Bureau of Adult and Comm. Education State of Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 44064 Baton Rouge, La. 70804
7.	Student Assessment and Evaluation Program	To develop instruments to assess level of ESL students	Development of Assessment instruments and procedures	Mr. Terry W. Krauss Principal Bassett Adult School 904 N. Willow Avenue La Puenta, Calif. 91746

One of the programs, A Telelesson Teacher Education Series, Basic Education: Teaching the Adult, deserves further explanation. The program consists of 30 half-hour videotapes on various topics related to teaching adults. A manual accompanies the tapes for additional comment and activities. Tape contents include:

1. An overview of the background of the ABE learner
   a. Characteristics and their implications
   b. Physiological, psychological, and sociological principles
2. Understanding and designing the ABE program
   a. Needs, interests, problems
   b. Activities for planning
   c. Conditions for setting learning climate
3. Developing the curriculum content
   a. Goals and behavioral objectives

b. Diagnosis

c. Reading process: skills of perception, word recognition, comprehension, and self-selection

d. Integrating communication, mathematics, vocational, and subject-area concepts

4. Using a variety of methods, materials, and techniques

a. Individualized and programmed instruction

b. Selection and development of material

5. Guiding the learner

a. Recruitment and retention

b. Evaluation and measurement of progress

6. Considering other factors

a. Legislation and demographic data

b. Possible learning difficulties

These tapes provide excellent ready-made materials for teacher training, and the person responsible for inservice training should be familiar with them. Since these innovative programs were identified, several States have developed additional training materials. Texas, Virginia, and Florida have staff development projects with materials available for others to use.

In 1971, the Texas Education Agency Division of Adult Programs supported efforts to investigate the applicability of a competency-based approach to staff development in ABE. A task force of ABE personnel identified broad competency areas for teachers and administrators.

Texas A&M University received funds to develop a series of learning modules providing the adult educator with the opportunity to increase his or her competency in teaching adults (Learning Modules for Adult Educators, 1978). For the purposes of the project, a module was defined as a self-contained set of learning experiences designed to facilitate the learner's attainment of a stated set of objectives. As a resource, these modules can offer several advantages that are especially appropriate to populations with diverse needs.

Given the above information, materials required to meet these needs had to be designed. To date, 22 modules have been developed, including packages in the areas of:

- A new teacher series (5 titles)
- Assessing needs and interests (4 titles)
- Relating to the adult student (4 titles)
- Administrative topics (3 titles)
- Instructional preparation (2 titles)
- Content-specific areas (4 titles: ESL/APL/GED)

In addition to the Texas A&M modules, North Texas State University received funds to develop 10 modules which would help provide teachers with the skills needed to teach reading to adults.

Ten videotape simulation modules demonstrating effective teaching methods and techniques were produced as a result of input from ABE practitioners in Virginia (Anderson, Snowden and Parent, 1980). These videotape simulation cassettes (about 10 minutes each) are based on the five most frequently identified critical and effective teaching methods and two appropriate instructional techniques per method. Each technique is presented on a videotape, and with accompanying user guides.

Method I -- Teacher-Student Relationship

Technique A: Understanding Concepts of Adult Learning
Technique B: Developing Interaction/Communication Skills

Method II -- Human Development and Identity

Technique A: Developing Student Self-Confidence (1)
Technique B: Developing Student Self-Confidence (2)

Method III -- Goal Planning

Technique A: Intake, Initial Goal-Setting and Placement
Technique B: Diagnosis and Mutual Goal-Setting

Method IV -- Presentation Skills

Technique A: Utilizing One-To-One Instructional Strategies
Technique B: Utilizing Group Instructional Strategies

Method V -- Study Habits Acquisition

Technique A: Promoting Questioning Skills
Technique B: Assigning Work of Practical Value

Florida's staff development activities (Burrichter and Gardner, 1979) focused on the overall goal of enhancing adult curriculum and instruction. As a result of a model for involving part-time personnel in developing curriculum materials, several resource materials were produced:

- Alternatives for Staff Development of Adult Educators
- Adult Educator Self-Assessment Inventory

- Learning Activities for Adults
- Teaching Adult Learners
- Involvement: A Creative Process

The unique aspect of this project was the actual involvement of a significant number of instructors (over 700) in the process. Another 25 individuals were specifically trained to conduct workshops and will be able to continue staff development activities in future programs.

IX. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 1980'S

Projection for the 1980's falls within two broad categories: technical skills and personal or humanistic skills. The areas cover training involving both content and process needs, and training which addresses these needs can be approached from a program planning and development standpoint.

Inherent in the program planning and development perspective is the need for a framework or method for providing necessary skills, i.e., identifying needed competencies, locating available materials and/or resources, and implementing decisions. These models also can serve as a guide for sharing successful results, materials, programs, etc. Co-operation among different agencies and groups associated with adult literacy and basic education programs can be facilitated by common planning models, thus preventing duplication and overlap.

Basic training philosophies can be approached within the broad parameters of planning and development. Content, as well as process skills, can be considered within a planning model. Since the student-directed philosophy is critical in meeting the needs of adult learners, identifying humanistic skills can be accomplished within this broad framework. Warm, enthusiastic, caring teachers are vital to the success of any adult literacy and basic education program. The necessity for sound instructional planning for these teachers is imperative. The 1980's are going to be challenging years for individuals in adult education. The expanding social complexities and information explosion make it imperative for adult educators to have a common purpose and to approach training needs from a sound, systematic planning model.

Successful training of adult literacy and basic education instructors encompasses these elements:

- Warm, enthusiastic, caring instructors are essential to a successful program.
- Both humanistic and technical skills need to be emphasized.
- A student-directed philosophy is imperative to meet the unique needs of adult learners.
- Training personnel to work with learners in the ways cited is vital.
- Some framework, or model, for providing necessary skills is necessary.
- It is necessary to use effective, available training programs and materials.
- Sharing successful results, practices, and materials is an absolute must.

- Co-operation among different agencies and groups associated with adult literacy and basic education programs is imperative to prevent duplication and overlap.

The concerns raised by Carter's and Kozol's quotes at the beginning of this paper recognize many problems associated with adult literacy and basic education programs. This paper maintains that one key to eliminating illiteracy rests with selecting and utilizing competent, caring instructors. Regardless of the setting, instructors must be selected and prepared to work with adults in an atmosphere conducive to learning.

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